

TOC H JOURNAL

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The Editor accepts no responsibility for statements made or opinions expressed by authors of articles or in speeches at meetings.

NOTE : As usual no JOURNAL will be published in September. The date by which news for the October issue is required is Thursday, September 23.

IS THE MAIN OBJECT OF TOC H PRACTICABLE? PART IV.

SOME of my friends in Toc H—I have several—have suggested that in the story of the rise of chivalry, in the story of the early Franciscans, it ought to be possible to find some light on the questions we are considering. I think that that is true, but there is a difficulty at the outset. I turned up the other day quite by accident the eloquent passage with which W. H. Lecky closes his book, *The Rise and Spread of Rationalism in Europe*. He claims, with full confidence, that the results of the spread of rationalism may justly be regarded as one of the triumphs of civilisation. And then, rather sadly as it seems to me, he ends his book with these words :—" But, when we look back to the cheerful alacrity with which men, in former ages, sacrificed all their intellectual and material interests to what they believed to be right, and when we realise the unclouded assurance which was their reward, it is impossible to deny that we have lost something in our progress." (It is possible, I think, to put things too delicately. He might almost have said that men were beginning to suspect that they had "poured out the baby with the bath-water." That, however, is not the point at the moment). These words of Mr. Lecky suggest the difficulty I have hinted at. Between the medieval and the modern point of view there is a difference which is more than serious, and which cannot be ignored if we are to look back to the Middle Ages with any profit.

I am not using the phrase "point of view" in a casual sense, as I might speak of the point of view from which I regard the Boat-race. The difference here concerns things which lie *behind* men's thoughts and actions, which are "at the root of conduct"—fundamental ideas, ideals, principles, standards. Some one has shrewdly pointed out that the most fundamental standards of all are those which determine "what can be regarded as fact, what can be believed to be true." That is the kernel of the difference between the medieval and the modern points of view. The beliefs that matter most are not those we acknowledge or assent to, but those which *pervade* our lives—so that, however much we try, as we often do, to forget them and get rid of them, they always come back, at times come back and take us by the throat. In that sort of sense, I

think, men in the Middle Ages, whatever their behaviour might be, believed in heaven and hell and death and judgment, believed that the supreme reality, here and now, is spiritual. This kind of belief in these things can hardly be said to be part of the modern point of view, in the sense in which I have used those words.

But the difference goes beyond personal beliefs. It concerns also the whole idea of human society and the relations of men to one another. F. R. Barry, in the book I quoted in March, remarks that "Christianity denies that civilisation can be built upon any merely natural foundation . . . because the power of living together is something which only the spirit of God makes possible." And, recognising that "man has come to be what he is, and will grow up to what he can become, only in and through a social life," he rejects as wrong any idea that society can be regarded as a collection of individuals—isolated, self-contained units—who live together on terms for reasons of practical convenience. All this merely brings out the force of St. Paul's statement:—"Ye are members of one another and of Christ." Man is so made that he cannot be truly himself without his fellow, or without God. These ideas—or these theories, if you like—were in the Middle Ages declared and driven home to men's minds by the position of the Church; they pervaded men's lives. I do not think that that is true to-day. But I think it *is* true that very many men to-day, in different ways and by different methods, are trying to recapture and declare and drive home these very same ideas. And I think Toc H is trying, in its little way, to do this. If the Main Resolution of its Central Council does not declare its conviction that the supreme reality, here and now, is spiritual, I do not know what any words mean. And the whole life of the family is steadily teaching us—I shall hope to have more to say of this—that we are "members of one another and of Christ." So I think, after all, that we may look back, not without hope of understanding them, to those people in the Middle Ages who understood, supremely, that the Christian life is a life of adventure.

Here is something of what J. A. Symonds has to say in his *Introduction to Dante* of the rise of chivalry:—

"Regarding chivalry, not as an actual fact of history, but as a spiritual force, tending to take form and substance in the world at a particular period, we find that its very essence was enthusiasm of an unselfish kind. The true knight gave up all thought of himself. At the moment of investiture he swore to renounce the pursuit of material gain; to do nobly for the mere love of nobleness; to be generous of his goods; to be courteous to the vanquished; to redress wrongs; to draw his sword in no quarrel but a just one; to respect oaths; to keep his word; and, above all things, to protect the helpless and to serve women. The investiture of a knight was no less truly a consecration to high unselfish aims for life than was the ordination of a priest. In the enthusiasm which inspired the knight, two main, and at first sight very different, influences mingled—the first was zeal for faith, the other zeal for love. . . . God was the ultimate object of the adoration of the chivalrous lover; but the lady

stood between his soul and God as the visible image and perpetual reminder of the heaven to which he ardently aspired. . . . The state of feeling generated by this love was called by the Provençals *Joie*. The word is curiously significant of the ecstasy which filled the heart of the true lover with delight, and made him feel in his exalted mood capable of almost more than mortal deeds. This *Joie* was less an emotion than a permanent state of feeling."

Before we go on let us set up against that a passage from Father Cuthbert's *The Romanticism of St. Francis* :—

"Chivalry was undoubtedly the most virile product of the romantic movement of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. . . . To it we owe the revival of the sense of man's dignity as dependent upon his self-inherent qualities, and of personal responsibility as attaching to strength and liberty. . . . It was this spirit in its purest form which St. Francis embedded into the conscious life of the Church. It governed his religious life as it had attracted his youthful ambition. To his vision the Gospel presented itself primarily as a divine romance in which was set forth that law and liberty of the personal spirit which secular chivalry aspired to but even at its best only imperfectly achieved. In this evangelical romance Jesus Christ was the Restorer of the world's joy. But whereas in secular romance joy was always elusive, in the Gospel it became a permanent possession to those who followed Jesus Christ in His sublime adventure for the world's redemption, and in His vast love for God and man. The Christ-life therefore was the ideal form and law by which men attain to that joyous realisation of self which is the ambition of the romantic spirit."

I leave those passages to speak for themselves, and pass on to an idea which is less irrelevant than may appear at first sight.

In June I quoted from W. W. Carlile's *Monetary Economics* a passage in which he suggested that the banking system was one of the surprising works of the common mind. I did that in order to hint that perhaps the industrial system was something of the same sort—that it had grown, had happened, and not happened quite right, possibly because the vitamins had been left out of the dietary. Now, on the next page of his book, Mr. Carlile makes these rather odd remarks : "No doubt money is the root of very much that is evil in the world, but so, for that matter, is sex. Both money and sex, however, belong to the very principle of life in humanity and in civilisation. What a victory, as Nietzsche says, was 'the spiritualisation of the sensuous,' the conquest effected by romantic love of the position it now holds in the thoughts of the men and women of the western world." Then he goes on to suggest that something of the same sort may some day be done for money. If for money, why not for all the things which money stands for and 'circulates,' for the whole system of industry? Perhaps the "surprising works of the common mind" must, like the individual man's natural impulses, be converted into "the vehicles and instruments of spiritual purposes." Perhaps in a truly Christianised State it might be as rare for a man to work merely in order to earn his daily bread as for a man to marry merely in order to have legitimate children.

I have quoted Symonds to make alive to us the phrase which Mr. Carlyle quotes from Nietzsche. To realise what "the spiritualisation of the sensuous" means we want to think quietly what man can do, and often does do, in this department of life. Then we need to grip and hold the absolute necessity of the victory, and of keeping the ground that it won. A very moderate study, if it is dispassionate, and is based on the fact that man is a living soul, will convince any sane person that human beings dare not live in this matter anywhere near the animal level. For they just cannot stop there. If they cannot rise clean above the animal level, they tend to go far below it. I have lived for years in the company of camels, and do not idealise animals unduly. And I have spent a large part of my life in business arising out of crime, much of it serious, some of it savage almost beyond belief. It was the most loathsome criminal I have ever known who taught me a new respect for the severity of the strict Christian view of all iniquity of this sort. His crime was not fully revealed in the Press—it could not be—nor could the whole story of his life be told. But the little that was told made an Oriental city gasp, and demand wildly that the law must make such things impossible. It was no idle curiosity which took me to see this wretched creature on the night before he was hanged. I was one of a group of matter-of-fact people required after a hard day's work to spend a long evening visiting a jail. I know that the men with me felt, as I did, that in the condemned cell was no *man*, but a *thing* radiating foulness and malignancy almost unbearably. It is this experience which, above all else makes me realise the greatness of the victory which chivalry won, turning some of the hardest commandments literally into the "glorious liberties of the children of God."

How was it done? The words I have quoted from Father Cuthbert serve, I think, to answer this. But it is put more neatly in a sonnet by one of the Italian poets of chivalry, Guittone of Arezzo—Mr. Symonds quotes it, using Rossetti's translation:—

"And, O, inspire in me that holy love
Which leads the soul back to its origin,
Till of all other love the link do fail.
This water only can this fire reprove—
Only such care suffice for such-like sin;
As nail from out a plank is struck by nail."

The low passion must be driven out by a high passion, the base desire by the love which, in Dante's phrase, "withdraws my eyes from all vile things." And it is driven out not easily but hardly.

Mr. Carlyle suggested that something analogous to the "spiritualisation of the sensuous" might some day be done for money—and I ventured to give his idea a wider application. It does seem to be the most urgent, the most crying need of our time. It is admitted on all hands—no Government escapes the "reproach" of "socialistic" legislation—that the principles which lie beneath the modern point of view cannot be left to operate freely by themselves. The

real issue—ultimately the only practical issue—is what principles are to govern the industrial relations of men. The real war is a spiritual war; and the real dividing-line is not the dividing-line of political party, or of “class.” The controversy turns in the end on “what can be regarded as fact, what can be believed to be true” about man’s nature and his capacity and his end. Given a real agreement on principles, I can imagine none of the great “practical” problems which oppress us so heavily presenting more than an interesting exercise to the able men engaged in the conflicts on both sides.

If men were to be “saved” by legislation and negotiation, if these were primary, instead of secondary, things, however important, surely Our Lord would have taught us to legislate and to negotiate, as well as to pray. There were political and social problems in Judæa in His day which were clamouring for solution. But he turned away from them all, and it was largely because of this that the end came as it did. He would not be the practical Messiah who would save his people from the practical evils which oppressed them. He turned away “to exhibit instead the triumph of spiritual force over material force—courage conquering pain, faith conquering utter darkness, perfect integrity triumphing over absolute catastrophe, perfect love over complete rejection.” If that was the way, if we really and truly believe that He is the way—or are prepared to try that out as a hypothesis—we must see that the only method which is really “practicable” is on the spiritual plane. And we must not be afraid to say, trying to live up to what we say, that it is love, and love alone, that can bring light on our industrial conflicts. For where love is there is God, and it is God that Everyman wants, and not your nostrum or mine. There really is our task, to live by this idea, to get this idea about. It is not enough to acknowledge that “man does not live by bread alone,” and that no man “standeth or falleth by himself alone.” The ideas behind these words must pervade our lives. “There is sometimes a lie of act implied in our whole life, a practical denial of our faith.” Much of the world we have to live in is based on principles which practically deny these two ideas. But Love asserts them, and Love must drive out the contrary principles. Only Love can “conquer Hate,” and that not easily but hardly “as nail from out a plank is struck by nail.”

We think of Toc H as The House that Love Built. We must not think of it as built for ourselves; but as a little thing which Love is trying to use, if we will let Him, in His task of building Everyman’s Home. It is because He is trying, we believe, to use it, and it is only in so far as He can use it that its Main Object is really practicable. So we must not be discouraged by thinking how little we can do. If we are doing all we can, “we are integral to a mighty plan.” If we are impatient, let us think of these words of Professor Henry Jones:—“Great men appear in great ages, and are the creatures of what they create. They come in the fulness of time, their messengers sent before their face, into a world which is waiting for them. . . . (The) base (of the greatest of them) is on the table-land of some great public emotion.” Are we so great,

you and I, that we cannot be content to help to the limit of our powers, trying to prepare the "fulness of time"? And if we are oppressed, as many of us often are, and more will be, by "the sense that we are in a wounded world, a world that seems wounded to death," do let us remember that "as the peace Our Lord promised is rooted in His forgiveness, and in His service, so it is rooted in the memory of His wounds." Our job surely is to fight for what we see clearly to be right, and against what we see clearly to be wrong, to strive steadily to be as certain as we can that we are really following in His steps, and not merely fancying that we are—and to remember that "there are no wounds so grievous as those in which He triumphed over death—He whose Kingdom shall have no end."*

We cannot always prevent a sense of oppression from stealing over us. But we must not yield to it, or let it hold us, if we are humbly trying to "follow Jesus Christ in His sublime adventure." The early Romans reckoned it the worst of crimes to despair of the republic. It is surely a greater fault for us to act as though we believed "that God had failed." And, faults apart, if Love has really touched us, if He is making us His own, what livery shall our souls wear? The knights of chivalry, the early Franciscans, the Elder Brethren would alike, I think, bid us wear that "joyalty of mind"—no passing emotion, but a permanent state of feeling—which was the reflection of their "cheerful alacrity." We shall not do it unless—having faced the facts, as they did—we hold firmly the truth that Our Lord *is* conquering, that spirit *is* triumphing over matter, that perfect Love *is* casting out fear—that fruitful mother of many evils.

P.W.M.

* NOTE.—For many of the phrases in this and the last paragraph, and for much else, I am indebted to Father André, of the Society of the Divine Compassion.—P.W.M.

"THE HYMN OF LIGHT."

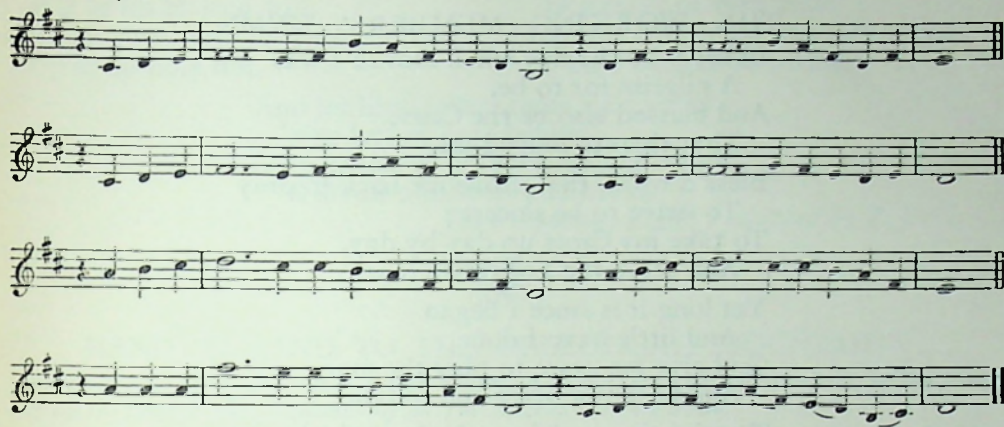
THE Third Annual Report of Toc H (printed in the JOURNAL, April, 1923) contained a "phantasy" entitled *In the Light of the Lamp*, the scenes of which were loosely held together by a set of verses, in part a paraphrase of a famous 4th century Greek hymn, *Joyful Light*. These verses were afterwards printed as "*The Hymn of Light*" and sung at the Birthday Thanksgiving of 1923 and subsequently. When the "phantasy" was adapted in 1925 into a "Masque" for performance at the Albert Hall, this hymn did not fit the splendid tune which Christopher Ogle was writing; new words were produced and sung (see "*Hail, joyful Light!*" in the January JOURNAL, 1926, p. 10). The original version, however, had taken some hold on Toc H and is not seldom sung among us—but a really fine tune has not hitherto been found for it. We hope that members will agree that Skipper George Moore at All Hallows has now solved the problem by using an adaptation of *The Londonderry Air*—the traditional Irish tune which is one of the most beautiful pure airs ever composed. (Many "arrangements" of it have been made and various sets of words sung to it; the Grenadiers' Band played it to us in the interval at last year's Birthday "show.") Opportunity has been taken to cut out four lines of the words which never "went" well to music, to combine the rest into three verses, and to make a few small alterations which make singing easier. The revised version, together with the air, is printed on the opposite page, in the hope that Branches and Groups will get such a hold of it as to make Manchester Cathedral ring with this music at the Birthday Thanksgiving next December.

B. B.

THE HYMN OF LIGHT.

Words by B. B.

Tune: *The Londonderry Air.*



O Joyful Light, O Glory of the Father,
Holy beloved Jesu Christ our Lord!
Now without fear we see the darkness gather,
For that on us Thy evening light is poured:
All through the night, whatever storm assail us—
Passion or pain, despair and shame and loss—
Thou till the day wilt hold and never fail us,
Victor before us of the bitter Cross.

Never the path so lost, but in Thee only
Trusting we see, and, seeking, find a way:
Strength of the tempted, Brother of the lonely,
From out our darkness bringest Thou the day.
Lo, having Thee, we lose not one another,
Sundered—united, dying but to birth;
All worlds are one in Thee, O more than Brother,
And one our family in Heaven and Earth.

So shine in us, our little love reproving,
That souls of men may kindle at the flame;
The whole world's hatred, broken by our loving,
Shall bow to Love, Thine everlasting Name.
Therefore to Thee be praises and thanksgiving—
To Father, Son and Comforter Divine:
We lift our voice and sing, with all things living,
O Light of Life, the Glory that is Thine.

TWO HYMNS FOR ANY THAT WOULD BE PILGRIMS

THE WORKING MEMBERS' HYMN

Bless'd be the day when moved I was
A pilgrim for to be,
And blessed also be the Cause
That thereto moved me.

Bless'd work, that drove me back to pray
To strive to be sincere ;
To take my Cross up day by day,
And serve the Lord with fear.

Yet long it is since I began
And little have I done,
God give me grace to play the man,
And heed my heart and tongue.

To seize the road from doubt to faith
For feet beside mine own,
To climb from self to purer breath,
Unknown and yet well-known.

With Master Fearing,* may I fear
My God and be afraid
Of doing anything while here
That may have Him betrayed.

With servant Great-heart, who arose
The children's Guide to be,
For those who trust me, I'd oppose
Each Giant enemy.

He that me seeks shall now be sought.
Surrendered here I stand,
A truant eager to be taught
His purpose for my hand.

Life, like an unencumbered flood,
Leaps to the sea and sky.
At last, beyond the slough of mood,
Master, thy man am I.

P. B. C. *much after John Bunyan.*

* "Now as they walked along the guide asked the old gentleman if he did not know one *Mr. Fearing*, that came on pilgrimage out of his parts. *HONEST* : Yes, very well, said he. He was a man that had the root of the matter in him, but he was one of the most troublesome pilgrims that ever I met with in all my days. . . . *GREAT HEART* : I was his guide from my Master's house to the gates of the Celestial City. *HONEST* : Then it seems he was well at last. *GREAT HEART* : Yes, yes, I never had a doubt about him. He was a man of choice spirit."—*The Pilgrim's Progress*.

A HYMN FOR THE LEAGUE OF THE LAMP.

LET the most Blessed be our guide And let him never suffer us
If it be his blessed will, To swerve or turn aside,
Unto his gate, unto his fold, From his free grace and holy ways,
Up to his holy hill. Whate'er shall us betide.

And let him gather them that shine
Who left us here behind.
Lord, make us pray we may be thine
With all our heart and mind.

John Bunyan, slightly adapted by P. B. C.



HAND IN HAND TO THE DELECTABLE MOUNTAINS.

*A little meditation about Toc H by Padre Williams of Christchurch, New Zealand, the furthest South
—if not the furthest from England—of all Toc H Groups in the world.*

I LIKE to think of Toc H with one hand reaching forward and upward, the other stretched out to welcome and to draw on Everyman. The attitude seems to typify aspiration and attraction: love upward and love outward; a good road to travel and a friend to bring along it to the Delectable Mountains.

If there were no mountains in view, why Toc H at all, or any platonic Platoon of sky-seekers? If the road and the hand be not for Everyman, but for my fraction or yours or someone else's fraction of Everyman, is the pilgrimage worth the making, only to end in an exclusive and yawning paradise?

Since man's invention has harnessed night and the storm, the universe has come to seem his prospective inheritance, and God has become an empty syllable to the world. The memory of hatred and death alone can tame his pride and teach him to empty himself in aspirations. God, born of woman and conquering death and hate through love, alone can fill the empty heart and lift life to completion. And there in line, surely we may humbly believe, Toc H stands as God's signal for the present time.

And if Egyptian, Babylonian and Greek trampled down the walls of separation to make the nations one for the universal faith to spring and spread from the heart of the world, have not four hundred years of white man's dominance made ready the outer seas to carry the Word more swiftly? Conquest and care and separation have left walls that only crumble under the crowding commerce of ideas. Everyman is come to the birth. His separate seclusion is gone, and his soul shivers nakedly for the warmth of Divine love. How shall he find it save through the friendliness of a friend? And that friend may be Toc H, must be someone with the Toc H spirit.

For in Toc H sacrifice that surrenders to the Cross goes with comradeship that loves fellow-men. One hand gropes painfully upward, the other clasps the hand of a friend.

A LITTLE DOSE OF TRADITION

A PREFATORY NOTE.

SOME time after his mother's death, Tubby, in going through her papers, found that she had preserved a number of letters which he had written to her on active service. The Editor of the JOURNAL is permitted to reproduce here those which concern the foundation and early days of Talbot House, in the belief that the record will be of real interest to members who knew the Old House and will be of value to their successors in Toc H, not only now, but even in days to come. These letters, written with no thought of publication, to one who had never seen the conditions under which they were penned, are a simple record of daily happenings—tiny details indeed against the huge background of the War. Anyone who looks for "fine writing" or moralising about war will be disappointed, for the writer was too busy "getting on with the washing" (in his own phrase) for anything more than these hasty messages home. Details in them which a stranger might find trivial seem far otherwise to us in Toc H: these things belong to the very "rock from which we were hewn, and pit out of which we were digged," and through them shines again and again the whole spirit and some of the plan of Toc H as it now goes forward round the world.

A few letters written by other hands have been included in the series, and these are distinguished by headings of their own.

These letters confirm (or sometimes correct) what Tubby afterwards wrote, more deliberately and in truer proportion, in *Tales of Talbot House*. The Editor has prefaced a good many of the letters with brief notes to explain allusions which—at this distance of time and to readers who never saw the War in the Ypres Salient or at all—would otherwise be obscure. References are also given to *Tales of Talbot House*, first to the page in the first edition (Chatto & Windus, 1919) and then, after a semicolon, to the page in the new edition (1924).

HALF A HUNDRED LETTERS.

I

Tubby had first gone out to France in the Spring of 1915 as Chaplain (Fourth Class—which may seem a modest valuation to those unfamiliar with the Army List!) on the staff of No. 16 General Hospital, which occupied the great hotel on the cliff above Treport. At the end of the Summer he was relieved by John Macmillan (now Archdeacon of Maidstone and Padre of the Canterbury Branch) and came home on leave, before being posted to other duties. Returning to the B.E.F. he writes the following note on board the leave-boat:—

Waiting on the boat at Folkestone,

Wednesday, Nov. 10th, 1915, 4 p.m.

We said good-bye at 12.45, so I was ensconced in a Pullman lunch car to watch in a semi-detached spirit the partings of other folk. This in itself was a moving drama, full of bravery and pathos. But when we got off, I found myself with three jolly companions, an R.A.M.C. doctor, a staff captain from General Headquarters who is going to put me up, or get me to the Deputy Chaplain General to-night, and a H.A.C. chap, who after nine months as a Tommy now comes back as a 2nd Lieut.

We had lunch together, and then played games with matches. Now the boat is waiting for relief trains, getting fuller and fuller as they arrive. I've never seen the main strength of the British Expeditionary Force before, and a most inspiring sight it is. The boatload is, I should think, a good *Multum in Parvo* of the British Expeditionary Force as a whole—even an Indian or two, and lots of Scotch. One or two of the men are tipsy, but all the rest are sober and a bit in the dumps, like boys going back to school. One wonders how many of them will see Folkestone again.

II.

Tubby reports at Montreuil. "*Gwynne*" is, of course, Bishop Gwynne (formerly Bishop of Khartoum, now of Egypt and Sudan), who as Deputy Chaplain General was the beloved chief of all C. of E. padres in the B.E.F. throughout the War. "*Neville Talbot*," second son of the then Bishop of Winchester, an old friend of Tubby's, had gone out from Balliol College, Oxford, where he had been chaplain for four years. He was not new to Army life, having served as a trooper in the South African War. At this time he was Senior Chaplain to the 6th Division, from which he was promoted in the following year to XIV Corps, and soon after to be Assistant Chaplain General of the "Reserve" (later Fifth) Army. At the end of the War he succeeded the present Bishop of St. Albans as Bishop of Pretoria. The 6th Division, to which Tubby was now posted, had first gone into action on the Aisne in September, 1914, and had been moved from Armentieres to the Salient as the Second Battle of Ypres was ending (May 1915), to relieve a Territorial division. Tubby's particular work was with the Buffs and Bedfords of the 16th Infantry Brigade: he was succeeded there by Rupert Ingalls, killed, in 1916, on the Somme while tending the wounded (*Tales* 6; 17).

G.H.Q.

Friday, Nov. 12th, 1915, 2 p.m.

We were delayed on the boat, and I only reached here late last night. I had an excellent interview with Gwynne, who spoke most warmly of work at No. 16. He is sending me, not to Guards Division, as before arranged, but, by special request, to work under Neville Talbot somewhere in the Ypres Salient. I go on by train in half an hour.

III.

A first impression of life in an "Army area." The story of how Tubby arrived at Poperinghe for the first time, set out on foot for Ypres by mistake in the dark, and was finally delivered at the "*Chaplain's Quarters*," will be found in *Tales* (10; 19). "*Beaulieu*" is Tubby's home in the New Forest, and his "*old parish*" was St. Mary's, Portsea. "*Jones*," who had taken his place with the Guards, is Rev. A. Llewellyn Jones, M.C. (a fellow curate at Portsea under the present Bishop of Southwark), now at Barrow-in-Furness.

Chaplain's Quarters,

c.o. 1st Leicesters,

6th Division, B.E.F.

Nov. 14th, 1915, Sunday afternoon.

I'm sitting in a kind of Wild West log-hut, with another tiny ditto just six yards outside the door and between the two buildings a lather of penetrating brown mud across which some trench boards are laid like stepping-stones. As I look through the open door (there being no windows and this the only mode of daylight entering) I catch a glimpse of the late Autumn undergrowth which surrounds this primitive but cheerful abode. It's altogether like living in a pheasant preserve, and the sound of the guns is like Beaulieu on the first of September, only that the noise is louder and more continuous—day and night from three points of the compass. It's very difficult to believe that it is real war, until one sees, as I saw on my first day, the ghastly reality of it in new ruins and new dead.

I'm living here in a kind of bush brotherhood of six, with my old friend Neville Talbot as our boss. This was the Deputy Chaplain General's rearrangement for me when I reached him on Friday, and I believe Jones has gone instead of me to the Guards Division. My flock are apparently to be some Buffs and Bedfords, but chances of really getting in touch, beyond Parade Services, seem few and far between. But I hope, please God, to find better work to do than mere parades and funerals. But it's early days yet, in a week or so I shall be able to see my way more clearly.

Meanwhile, I could not have cheerier company than the brotherhood aforesaid; it is more in the style of a pre-historic peep at my old parish than anything else. There's plenty to eat, rightly and naturally of the simplest type. Cold and wet are the great enemies.

IV.

At the end of this letter comes the first hint of the job which was destined to become Talbot House at Poperinghe.

Wednesday night, Nov. 17th, 1915.

I'm sitting on our only piece of normal furniture—the rest is planks and trestles and boxes.

What supports me is a Belgian music stool ; how we came by it I don't know, nor where the piano is, nor the pianist. The homes round here are mostly roofless ruins. Our little log hut is cosier than when I last wrote—we have some coal at last and candles for which shell cases make safe candlesticks. Talbot is also writing home, and the other four are moving about collecting overcoats and other garments to reinforce their bed blankets on a cold night. Everything outside is both cold and wet, and the shells are screaming sullenly overhead from our big batteries. They sound like motor buses in the sky, and it's rather like living under Niagara Falls—but one gets used to it, and we are quite safe here. The place is, for censorship purposes, curiously like the wood in Alice in Wonderland, where no one has any names. Our work, so far as I can see, is of the bush brotherhood type : services for all sorts of scattered units, entailing a journey per man of some fifty miles a week, riding, walking and wading ; but a real rough welcome and some kind of pot-luck wherever one goes. Then there are the rather ghastly funerals in places more or less accessible, and the caring for the men who are "resting" after so many days and nights in the advance trenches. Our work naturally entails a good deal of roughing it, mud, wet, cold and weariness. But this is mostly healthy for someone not thirty till next month, and is not worthy to be mentioned in comparison with the heroic patience of the men who stand in the waterlogged trenches day and night. Nothing is too good for these men, and the nearer one is to the actual scene of their martyrdom the more one realises the splendour of the spirit which can endure it with such quiet and cheerful resolution.

What my own work is to be is not yet quite decided. Possibly (everything is in a state of flux) I shall be moved back a few miles to run a kind of Church hut in a town through which many troops are continually passing, or I may share the Chaplaincy of the Brigade with a nice Cambridge man here. I am equally happy either way. At present I have very little to do, except to try and learn the ropes and the geography, which is complex and vital.

V.

The actual British casualties in killed, wounded and missing of all ranks in "*the two great battles*" were :—"First Ypres" (October 19–November 22, 1914), 58,155 ; "Second Ypres" (April 22–May 25, 1915), 60,260. The average daily casualties in the Saient for four and a half years are calculated to have been 230 m. en.

Friday night, Nov. 18th, 1915.

The guns are still rumbling away, interspersed with the staccato popping of Maxims, but this is quietness from the point of view of the larger warfare. "Nothing doing," as they say in the Navy—only a few men's lives sacrificed day and night, in a place of which John Buchan says that not less than 100,000 died in the two great battles. Meanwhile my work is beginning to begin, so to speak. Locomotion is the principal problem. I went out on a borrowed horse to-day, but the traffic and the mud are both so dense that it was hardly an enjoyable ride. At one point, to let some transport past, I turned her to the side of the *pavé*, and instead of a foot of slush she went down in it almost to the stirrups, but I got her out without coming off. It's not good enough, however, for anything but a finished horseman ; and so I am taking to a push-cycle, which are supplied to us. Motor cycles are prohibited except for despatch riders and suchlike.

Sunday will obviously be as busy a day as the week has been slack, and to-morrow I go far and wide to arrange services with the unfortunate battalions temporarily committed to my care. As they are resting for some time to come, I shan't be right up again until Christmas probably. I may even shift quarters from here for a time, so as to be nearer them, and try and get into personal touch. There are very few facilities for this unfortunately, but I hope for some Confirmation work soon to develop among them.

VI.

The "white, ur coats" made of shaggy goatskins, issued to troops in the winter, used, combined with 'tin hats' and miscellaneous equipment, to give men an oddly medieval touch—as though their forbears of Agincourt and Poitiers had come back to life! Some of the "little crosses," an inch or so long, stamped out of metal, which it was Tubby's habit to give away, are still to be found in the possession of Foundation members of Toe H and are still "highly prized." The aspect of *Poperinghe* at this time is described in *Tales* (Chapter III):—"Poperinghe was without a rival locally. Alone free for years among Belgian towns, close enough to the line" (it was seven miles West of Tpres and a dozen from the front line) "to be directly accessible to the principal sufferers, and not so near as to be positively ruinous, it became metropolitan not by merit but by the logic of locality." The "Town Hall" and the "Post Office" are modern Gothic buildings standing together at the East end of the big Grande Place, on the South side of which the "Cinema" occupied a damaged hall.

Monday, Nov. 20th.

Yesterday, I had an easy Sunday—only three services in all, but these entailed ten miles or more on a bicycle on roads that are scarcely worth the name. However, a Navvies' battalion is busy repairing them, and the slow procession of traffic is full of interest. The motor transport lorries in endless line, a gun or two, columns of men swinging along in their white fur coats and workmanlike kit, motor cyclists dashing in and out, great Staff cars tearing along, horses and mules, ambulances, companies of men with towels going down for hot baths, all make an endless medley of warfare on the great main roads. Everything off the roads moves still more slowly in a world of mud that cannot be imagined. Mud everywhere, ankle-deep, knee-deep, as if the whole country were a byre in the middle of a farmyard. But everyone sticks it gamely, and a heavy frost, like that of this morning, makes the surface more possible for walking.

I left our quarters yesterday about 10 a.m., and after cycling about five miles at a snail's pace took a voluntary parade service in a hop-field for some troops resting in billets. About two hundred men came, after that we had a celebration in the kitchen of a Flemish farm house, to which only eight came, including the O.C. and three subalterns. Afterwards I distributed little crosses which were highly prized.

Then I waded back to the little *Eslamiet* where I had left my bicycle, and, by dint of making friends with some little Belgian children, was invited into the family circle, and given a delicious cup of black coffee. I tried to pay for this, but they indignantly refused—a girl of thirteen, who had learnt French at school, acting as interpreter. So I gave her one of the crosses as a souvenir, and cycled thence to an A.S.C. camp, where arriving early for the service, I was hailed in Colonial fashion and sat down to a huge chop. The service was ready before I had finished this meal, and subsequently, after a little chat with the officers, I regained the road, and came back to (*Poperinghe*), where a message was awaiting me at the Town Hall—situated in a huge Square which is half in ruins with long distance shelling—that the Anti-Aircraft people five miles away were in action or something, and could not therefore hold 4 p.m. service as arranged.

So I went and worried the post office people, enlisting their sympathies on behalf of a padre who was hungry for errant correspondence; and they told me—the interview took place in a post office half filled with an enormous four-post bed; unusual furniture for S. Martin's Le Grand—that a pile of letters had gone my way for me that very morning.

So home to tea as aforesaid. And after tea, letters, &c., together with a *Daily Chronicle* I had managed to cadge from the A.S.C. till family Evensong at 7 p.m. At the first lesson, in came the C.O. of a battalion billeted hard by, who joined in, stayed to supper, and sang half the hymn-book through afterwards, not leaving till 11.30 p.m. It is these individual men of religion that make life possible amid surroundings that are essentially a contradiction of Christianity.

This afternoon—think of it!—we are all going to the Cinema to tea and "movies." And this with Germans thundering away on three sides of us. What a world of contrasts it all is!

VII.

Definite steps are taken by Neville Talbot towards finding the House. It will be noticed that from the first the Chapel was foreseen: and the place was to be "homely" and the "pictures" to be "not patriotic prints either" (*Tales* 3; 14).

Friday afternoon, Nov. 27th.

The winter sun is shining brightly, and one of the battalions I am responsible for is camped invitingly close, so I mustn't be long. To-morrow, my other battalion is taking me in for the week-end, where they are resting. And I go down with a sleeping sack, shaving soap, &c., to them in the queer old caravan we call our own, and stop till Monday. This enables me to get to a multitude of little units in these parts for Sunday services—a Field Ambulance, a workshops place, another battalion hard by. In some measure the Sunday's work thus compensates for the lack of opportunities during the week.

Talbot is trying to get an empty house for me in the nearest town, where I can both live myself and start some kind of homely club for a few of the multitudes of troops who pass to and fro. I'm strongly in favour of this, as it's work I should be less of a duffer at than this bush brotherhood business, with its distracting distances. If it pans out, I shall want a lot of odd things like papers and pens and pictures (of the *Pear's Annual* type) and shall also have a room for a Chapel which we badly need for Confirmation work as well as Celebrations.

They are potting at some Bosche aeroplanes while I sit here writing, but I'm too *blasé* already to find much amusement in getting a stiff neck watching.

VIII.

Tubby is now "taking over"—from M. Cœvert Camerlynck, the owner—the Old House in the Rue de l'Hopital, Poperinghe (*Tales* 16; 23). The parallel between Talbot House and "Pusey House" at Oxford, a church house for undergraduates, has something to be said for it—but would not be likely to strike most visitors to the two places. "The hole where the shell hit it" was at the back, at the North-east end of the House; it made hay of one of the bedrooms and a corner of the attic (afterwards the Chapel) above it. It was now boarded up, but—in spite of its German origin—it figured, to the tune of 2,000 francs, in the bill for dilapidations presented to Talbot House at the end of its tenancy!

Tuesday, Nov. 30th, 1915.

I am very busy living with one of my battalions in billets and taking over a jolly house which is to be the Pusey House of the place, when we have swept it out and bunged the hole where the shell hit it.

IX.

The *Corps General* was the Earl of Cavan, commanding XIV Corps (see Letter xxxix. The "perfectly delightful Chapel" at this time occupied the second floor landing: it enshrined from the first the old Carpenter's Bench (now the altar in the chapel of Mark I, London), which had been found in the garden (*Tales* 20, 67; 25, 51). "A kind of hotel-keeper"—so Leonard Browne heads Chapter x of *Tales* "The Innkeeper," and Prof. Will Rothenstein gave the same title to his portrait-drawing of Tubby in 1919. This letter contains the first mention of No. 239, Pte. Pettifer, A, 1st the Buffs, soon after to be nicknamed "The General" (or more commonly "Gen"). He remained on the staff of the Old House in Poperinghe to the last; was from 1920 to 1925 majordomo of Toc H Mark I, and is now back at his old job of trying to be Tubby's shadow. (For further details, including the incident of the carpet, see *Tales* 53-65; 44-50.)

Wednesday, Dec. 1st, 1915.

I am getting happier daily at my new job here, which is of the kind I more or less understand, *i.e.*, being friendly to all comers, without any of the regimental business to bother me. To-morrow, the Corps General, a most exalted personage, comes to inspect the place. We have not much to show him at present, excepting one reading room ready for action and a perfectly delightful Chapel. We had only heard of his advent to-night, when it was too late to go and weed the garden. I shall be glad when he's come and gone, and the place is in full swing by next week. It's an odd business turning into a kind of hotel-keeper, but plainly it's needed, and gives one a real chance of personal influence, so far as one has any to use.

It's very jolly the way chaps already begin to drop in casually to play about, fix up the Chapel, hang up lamps, mend chairs, dust, brush and carpenter. I had tea to-night with some jolly

military police. You can make your minds quite easy about me so long as I'm on this job—there is no danger whatever, and I shall laugh and grow fat and sleep warm. My only cares will be parochial, *i.e.*, that I'm doing my job, and domestic—the ordering of an establishment with a staff of four servants. My own—Pettifer by name—is an old Buffs man of 28 years service on and off, who knows nothing about a house except what he has gleaned from Mrs. P. in Bethnal Green. The great difficulty is to prevent him “scrounging” in my interests. He will retrieve anything like a faithful dog of that description. On Sunday, having overheard that I wanted a bit of carpet for the Chapel, he scrounged some from an empty house next door. When I pointed out to him that we could scarcely say our prayers on a carpet thus acquired, he suggested meekly that it would do equally well for the living room. I felt quite a brute making him put it back.

X.

This letter is headed with the name of the House for the first time. It also shows that the “official” Birthday on December 15, as Toc H now keeps it, lags a little behind the truth. “About December 10” says *Tales* (19; 25), “a party of male housemaids from the Bedfords set the inner house in order”—but this job was already going on by December 1 (see Letter ix). And the visit of “*about forty men*,” recorded here, is made in *Tales* (21; 26) to happen on December 19. The Old House, then, actually held its “house-warming” on December 11, and its first Communion service next day. (By a happy accident the Toc H Birthday Festival of 1926 will be held on December 11 and 12.) “*The Nutshell*” was the boys’ magazine of St. Mary’s parish, Portsea.

Talbot House,

Monday, Dec. 6th, 9.30 a.m.

Talbot has given me the job of opening a kind of Church House here in a town full of troops, some permanent like police, signal Cos., R.E.’s, R.A.M.C., A.S.C., &c., others coming in and out on their way up. True the Boche are less than ten miles away on three sides of us, and don’t let us forget it from time to time. But, if they shell this place, one or other of their own billets gets a return of the compliment with interest from our “heavies.” So that the game is, on the whole, unprofitable from their point of view.

I have written for the *Nutshell* a fairly full description of the house as we found it, so won’t repeat it here. It is a beautiful house with a lovely garden, full of standard roses, pergolas, wall-fruit and a chicken run.

I’m going to get together a little batch of amateur gardeners to run the garden in spare time—it will be a peaceful recreation, much appreciated, and I’m anxious to have the place in apple-pie order. After the voluntary service last night (held in a music hall) about forty men came round with me and went over the house, which was great fun and made them quite keen on it all. We have an inaugural Concert on Saturday night, and on Sunday morning at 11.15 the first Celebration in our Chapel (a big landing on the second floor). There is room for fifty or sixty, and I hope we shall have it full. Celebrations out here have nearly always to be regardless of the fasting rule, owing to exigencies of work.

Meanwhile as I write, a stream of traffic like that of Fleet Street passes slowly—staff cars, motor cyclists, lorries, waggons, horsemen, ambulances, soldiers of all sorts and descriptions, carts with furniture of refugees who can stand it no longer (probably when the real risk is over) tied on precariously. I covet these chairs and tables greatly. Meanwhile papers and books from time to time will be a real help. The men here are grateful for the simplest kindness shown to them personally: a cup of cocoa and a Belgian bun do not lack their reward.

My Christmas promises well, please God. One of my battalions has asked me to Celebrate for them just behind the line (they are out resting for the present) and then we have great festivities here on Christmas evening, with “Box and Cox” acted by some men in the Mobile Vets.—the horse hospital chaps who gave me lunch yesterday.

XI.

The name *Talbot House* (already used, in point of fact, in the previous letter) was substituted for the contemplated "Church House" at the "*command of Divisional H.Q.*" in the person of Col. R. S. May (then A.A. and Q.M.G. of 6th Division, now Col. Sir Reginald May, Chairman of Toc H Central Executive, *Tales* 32; 32). It was clearly intended to be called after Neville Talbot, but the name was soon used to commemorate his younger brother Gilbert, Lieut., Rifle Brigade, killed at Hooge on July 30, 1915. On the night this letter was written (the Birthday as Toc H members now keep it) the House, as a divisional rest-house, received its first "hostellers"—so to speak—and thus became the forerunner of all Toc H "Marks" in the world. One of the first guests here mentioned, who left his name in the visitors' book, was a namesake, but not a relation of Tubby's (*Tales* 28; 29). As time went on Neville Talbot was instrumental in starting and running an Officers' Club in a house round the corner (see Letter xli); Talbot House continued, of course, to be the house of officers and men alike. The "*man in a battery*" was Lieut. Robinson, 47th Battery, and the *piano*—duly secured (see the strange history in *Tales* 22-26; 26-28)—now adorns the club-room of Mark VII, London.

Talbot House,

Wednesday morning, 3.30 a.m.

December 15th, 1915.

A good deal has happened since last week. You will note in the first place that the name of the house has changed for the better—this was a command from Divisional H.Q., and has been carried out in spite of Talbot's protests. I am glad, as a Junior Chaplain, to find that there are men so resolute in high command that they can impose their will on the Senior Chaplain! Moreover he deserves it, and his name is one to conjure with on all sides. Secondly, the house is now open in two departments out of three. The men's part accommodating about a hundred for reading, writing and arithmetic, opened on Saturday, with a singsong at which I sang the ditty about "sixteen blades and a corkscrew."

On Sunday, our little Chapel was full for the Celebration at 11.15, and there is every promise of it being the centre of real work and worship among the men coming and going through here. I am very happy and cheerful about this. It is work I more or less understand, and does not involve any regimental red tape.

Another sphere of the house's work accounts for my being up to-night. I have just sent my first two weary travellers to bed, after soup and biscuits, and they will have excellent breakfasts in the morning before they go on their way rejoicing: this is the opening of our divisional rest-house, to which officers coming and going by trains in the small hours can come and get supper, bed and breakfast. To-night, being the first time, I went up to the station with the very nice night-orderly—I now control a staff of three men under an N.C.O. besides my own, Pettifer—and rescued these two from a cold night in the waiting room (so called). We can accommodate twelve, and shall have the house full every night a week hence, when it is known.

Both were profoundly grateful, and were nearly moved to tears by the carpet slippers awaiting them.

The third department of the house—the Officer's Clubroom—is not ready yet, but will be, I hope, in a few days—and all this within a few miles of the German lines.

I have a lot to do to-morrow, or rather to-day. In chief, I have a lorry to board at 10 a.m. and go up and hunt for a man in a Battery, who does not know me from Adam, but is believed to have a piano up his sleeve, which I propose to relieve him of.

XII.

"*Dear Bates*" is the Rev. H. R. Bates (*Tales* 6, 34; 16, 33), now Vicar of St. James, Shirley, Southampton, a great pioneer of Church Army huts. The other five "*padres of the Division*" were Reid ("adopted by" the Queen's Westminster), Hamer (with the Durhams), Wheeler (with the Yorks and Lancs.), Kinloch-Jones (with the 71st Infantry Brigade), and Tubby (with the Buffs and Bedfords). See *Tales* (6; 17).

Monday, Dec. 20th, 1915.

We had anything but a quiet week-end—a very vexatious strife which broke out at odd intervals by day and night: with the result that what with shelling of the town in the small hours, a crowd in the Field Ambulance, and funerals, writing has been disturbed and sleeping likewise.

Dear Bates, one of the six padres of the Division, got his leg broken about five minutes after he left us yesterday morning, rescuing a small child from a beastly aeroplane bomb ; he's quite all right but it's a two months' job, so we are very shorthanded for Christmas. My round of services on Sunday takes me out of the town to units in the neighbourhood, so I was, as usual, well out of the excitement. But it's an unpleasant proceeding at best, though we did not need our cellars. However the cads got more than they gave, and things are quiet again now.

I had the forethought to get Christmas carols in stock, and we had a carol practice last night with a crowded choir in the men's recreation room. It is extraordinary how the meaning of Christmas grips and holds us out here. For example, on Friday, an unknown R.E. Sergeant-Major came right away down, not because he knew me, but because he had heard that I had a copy of Christmas carols with music. This he begged to be allowed to borrow, in order that one of his men might copy the score, and others the words ; so that they might not be carol-less in the exposed position where they are stationed when the day of days comes. He was as good as his word and returned the book this morning by a messenger.

Our programme for Christmas is quite tentative as yet, but on Christmas Eve we have, in the dear little Chapel, Festival Evensong at 6 p.m., followed by a Celebration at 6.30 p.m. for those on duty by night. On Christmas Day we have no Parade services, but only Celebrations everywhere ; and in the afternoon and evening I have thrown open the house for a regular old-fashioned romp. The divisional train has supplied a huge Christmas tree, and what with singing and games of all sorts, I hope for a really happy Christmas for us all, please God.

If possible, I shall go up and Celebrate for my regiment just behind the line in the early morning.

These outlines will give you some idea of what I shall be doing on Friday and Saturday so that we may be in touch thus, as in other ways.

XIII.

"*That devilish gas*" had been used for the first time by the enemy on April 22, the opening day of the Second Battle of Ypres. Anti-gas measures were hastily improvised during the next months' fighting, and the "*new helmets*," here extolled, were the "P.H." pattern (a white cloth hood with holes for the eyes, which made even the best men look like Ku-Klux-Klanists), later to be superseded by the much more effective "box-respirator." There is a gallant and humorous story of the conduct of a party of the Q.W.R. in the gas attack on December 19, here referred to, in *Tales* (31 ; 31). The incident of the *dish-cloths*—see *Tales* (27 ; 29). The attempt to "*get the huge attic licensed by the R.E.'s*" failed, but the move from the landing to the "Upper Room," here contemplated, took place not long after (*Tales* 67 ; 51. See further in Letter xxx). For "*Hamer*," see note to Lett r xii ; he is now Vicar of St. Luke's, Kingston-on-Thames.

Sunday, Dec. 26th, 1915, 1 p.m.

We had a highly unpleasant week-end before Christmas—I imagine the idea was to get the "strafing" over before the parcel post came in on both sides. I was taking a Service with the Labour Battalion when it started ; we were at the second verse of "*Rock of Ages*" ; the Adjutant dashed out and in again to signal to the Colonel that the Parade should be dismissed, but the old navvies wouldn't budge until they finished their hymn ; as one of them said afterwards to me : "If we were going to be hit, we'd better be singing hymns than hiding !"

The business went on intermittently all day and both nights, so that it was rather a sleepless week-end. My dear old Pettifer of the Buffs takes command on these occasions, being exceedingly war-wise like Alward, and orders the garrison off the upper floors when things are getting hot. But it all quieted down again on Tuesday, and not a shell has come into the town at all. Yesterday, all was peace except a little anti-aircraft shooting.

We had a lot of visitors at all times of the day and night last week ; Officers and men almost collapsing with that devilish gas ; all their buttons and cigarette cases green with it. But the new helmets are magnificent.

Now, let us put the war on one side, and come to the house itself and domestic problems. We are really getting along swimmingly, and the place is in full swing; the old shell hole covered with boards and blankets, and little pieces of holly stuck in the shrapnel holes in the walls. I am writing at a dining-room table of my own design, the top being the floor boards of a small tent, covered with wall paper. The piano is going full tilt (or lilt) all day long, but I want some more popular song books—old English songs, &c.

Last week the A.D.M.S. came round on a tour of sanitary inspection. As luck would have it, he popped his head into the kitchen and asked "How many dish-cloths have you got?" Unfortunately, the question was answered by a simple and truthful R.A.M.C. man (who has now left us under a cloud): "Please sir, we wipes up with the wrappings off the parcels, sir."

I nearly had a fit outside, but tried to pull myself together when the great man came out and said, "Very extraordinary about your dish-cloths."

I said blithely, "Oh! that will be all right, sir. We are sending to —— for some to-morrow."

"How many?"

I hadn't the least idea so I replied, "Oh a dozen, I expect."

To which he replied severely, "You must have six dozen and boil them every night." However, when we found out that the price of them here is 1.50 fr. each, we got only a dozen after all. If you can get me another dozen at a reasonable price, we shall be thankful, as about three hundred people have cocoa, &c., here every day. Now for Christmas.

The Chapel on the landing is simply splendid—everyone has put in time, taste and trouble to make it as perfect as possible. The only disadvantage is that it will only hold fifty at the outside.

We hold Evensong there daily at 7.15 with a congregation of about ten, Celebrations on Saturdays, &c., but if we can get the huge attic licensed by the R.E.'s to carry the weight of numbers, we shall move our Church up there.

On Christmas Eve we had an early Celebration for a company of Q.W.R.'s who were going up to the trenches for Christmas. In the evening we had Festal Evensong, followed by a Celebration for night duty men; both were well attended, but there were no communicants that night—the natural feeling against making one's Communion at night is very strongly felt here; and those for whom I had intended it got off and came yesterday morning.

Three Chaps rigged up a glorious little Crib with lint, cotton wool, and a Christmas star. Then an electrician rigged up a tiny lamp off a dry battery to shine down from the top—they burnt it all down once after two days' work, trying to fix a candle—and it stood on a bamboo plant stand discovered in the garden and draped beside the Carpenter's bench Altar. We had the Church furnished well with joyful guests at 7 and at 8, and again at 11.30, both yesterday and to-day: among other pleasures, being the quiet coming of the Town Major at 8 a.m. who had not previously been at all sympathetic.

Hamer and I kept open house yesterday afternoon and evening, an extremely cheap business; tea from the billet next door, halfpenny buns, a lot of odd cake, and some holly from Boldre (not for consumption); from 3-5 a concert; then tea—the Corporal tells me that 270 men had some sort of tea, including a couple of Belgian soldiers; then Evensong (that was when one felt the inadequacy of the Chapel); then conjuring by a policeman from Portsmouth, and more songs, and carols till 8.30, and a little bit of a dance after that. It was a huge success, and chap after chap said that they didn't think it possible to have spent so happy a Christmas away from home. I am really overjoyed with the opportunities of it all here, and no longer regret the Hospital.

XIV.

"Two old Exeter men"—i.e., members of Tubby's old College at Oxford.

Talbot House,

Jan. 3rd, 1916.

I'm very snug and happy here now. They haven't shelled the town for a week or more, and the weather is looking up, so that the garden is gradually getting less sodden and in a few days Pettifer and I will scrounge a spade—and then for the young potatoes!

Otherwise the house is excellent—full to overflowing, very cheerful, very cheery, and doing its part both spiritually and socially. I shall try and get leave soon.

I'm getting in love with my parish—surprises are always turning up in the shape of odd units doing this or that, and old friends from home. Two old Exeter men were discovered on Saturday alone—one stopping the night, the other I met in the street, and we knew one another after ten years, more or less. One gets a good chance of seeing people here—I've had over a hundred officers through since December 15.

The men are also a gold mine. A Mirfield boy yesterday, and all sorts of fine stuff among Signallers and such like; while the old Navvies are a never ending source of interest—poor old things; they work like Trojans and are very well looked after.

XV.

January 6th.

. . . I am most struck by their (*i.e., the officers'*) courtesy and goodness of the quiet downright kind. It's a delight to be able to do anything like this for them.

As for the men, they are quite wonderful. One is always unearthing something splendid. Just after Christmas, we had some gorgeous Yorkshire fellows in one of our huts, "drunken but not with wine," and the form their humour took was, on entrance, "three cheers for the Kaiser!" which was given with ironical enthusiasm. What can the gates of Hell prevail against this?

XVI.

Talbot House,

Tuesday, Jan. 11th, 1916, 4 p.m.

I'm confined to the house at present by an episode which had both its ridiculous and its painful side. About a week ago, I had a party of Q.W.R. stretcher bearers—they are a glorious set of people, and had a very thin time of it with the gas attack on the 19th. Anyhow the French teapot refused to pour. No hatpins available, so the leader of them, called Tiny—he is about as big as Neville Talbot—said just "blow down the spout, padre, it's the only way." I did so too heartily with the result that the lid came off and the hot tea leaves all up my cheek. It was frightfully absurd at the time, but the burn has now cut up rusty and I have a bit of a swelling which the Labour Battalion M.O. has in hand; it is bandaged by the R.A.M.C. Corporal who is my chief of Staff (that's the best of these wonderful R.A.M.C. men), but for a day or so it means keeping inside Talbot House. However, I'm getting a lot of things straight meanwhile and my letters done.

The great difficulty here is to have food ready at all times of the day and night. Over a hundred officers have stayed here, and it's most interesting meeting them thus . . .

XVII.

Tubby's "*peculiar parish*" was, of course, never confined to Talbot House. When he told one that he was "going slumming," it meant a visit to some battery position, where, like as not, he would spend the night (see "An outpost of Talbot House," by a gunner, in *Tales* 147; 101). He "followed his men about," says Leonard Browne (*Tales* 124; 86), "and visited them whenever he could. He felt his work at Talbot House was too safe, and did what he could to share the hardships and dangers of his customers." This letter contains the first mention of Edmund Street, Major, Sherwood Foresters (*Tales* 21; 26), who was afterwards (October 15, 1916) killed on the Somme. It was at this time that he brought

over from England the portable harmonium for Talbot House (*Tales* 75; 56). This veteran "groan-box"—some of whose Sunday trips are mentioned in Letters xxxv, xxxviii, xxxix and xli, and yet another described in the *JOURNAL* of May, 1924, p. 124—now reposes, voiceless, in the Chapel of Mark I. His family made the first contribution at Poperinghe to what became the Service Candidates Ordination Fund (*Tales* 88; 64). His sword, brought back from Canada, was set in its rest in All Hallows, Barking-by-the-Tower, by the Prince of Wales at the 1924 Birthday Festival of Toc H. (A memoir of Edmund Street will, it is hoped, shortly appear in these pages.) For "*Reid*," see note to Letter xii.

Talbot House,
Monday, Jan. 17th, 1916.

I've got my old periodic go of malaria, that has come round so regularly three or four times a year. I know it better than the doctors, who however have the whip hand this time and have confined me to bed for 48 hours. I worked happily through yesterday, so must not kick against the pricks to-day. It's not the least serious and will probably get me a 48 hours' holiday at Le Treport before the end of the week. Neville is coming himself to be O.C. Talbot House for a few days, which will be excellent for everyone. Meanwhile Pettifer and the R.A.M.C. staff have been coming up all the morning to wash me, or comb my hair, or generally spoil me.

At this moment my C.E.M.S. Secretary, Corporal Ashdown, R.A.M.C., looked in with a semi-professional eye. We have collected a goodly lot of C.E.M.S. men here now—over fifty have signed the roll on the notice-board and we meet every Sunday at 5 for tea and business to be followed by our evening service at 6 p.m. This Service is growing rapidly—in fact we were crowded out last night. I wasn't up to taking it, so Reid took it for me and excellently well too.

Some things are really encouraging. During the week a certain R.G.A. colonel called one morning (I was out, I try to get a bit of visiting done in the mornings: it makes all the difference)—and left a delightful note asking for a regular Sunday service for his battery. The trouble is that batteries are not really in any Division, so sometimes get left padreless. Anyhow, they sent a big car for me yesterday afternoon and I had one of the best services possible in a place where we could not stand upright. This was my first real visit to a battery headquarters, which for obvious reasons have few visitors. Batteries themselves have none.

This introduction led to another, and on our way back I was given an equally warm welcome by the O.C. battery transport, whose men had not had a padre near them since they came to France! It is these odd units that form my peculiar Parish.

I read the *Treasury* this morning almost from cover to cover. I love the thing on "shepherd." Also the *Sketch* and *Comic Cuts* inside it!

I hear from the Vicar to-day that dear Paddy is dying—it is heartbreaking not to see him again now, but it is only a question of waiting for the great Reunion. A year ago I should have felt it much more acutely, but now one gets so used to the idea of death that one comes to realise, as Edmund Street, a brave man, said to me yesterday, that death is far from being the worst thing that can happen to a man.

XVIII.

Talbot House,
Tuesday, Jan. 18th, 1916.

I'm having another lazy day in bed, as the temperature is still a good deal "above par." If it is not down by to-morrow, the M.O. threatens to send me in officially sick, which will mean you will get another of those ridiculous telegrams and I shall be carted away for a few days in some queer hospital or other. I couldn't be better looked after than I am here, with an entire R.A.M.C. staff titivating me day and night with professional precision and almost motherly care.

The doctor is as convinced as I am that there's nothing really wrong, only just a rather stiff bout of the old feverish attacks.

I shall get my two days at Treport alright either at the end of this week or the beginning of next.

XIX.

Tubby is sent down to No. 14 General Hospital at Boulogne. The "*week*" of Neville Talbot's administration turned out to be nearly a fortnight (see Letter xxvii)—and then Tubby was back only for a week before going on leave.

Wednesday, Jan. 19th.

The temperature is still obdurate, so the M.O. is sending me for a day or so to an Officers' Hospital in a town about 16 miles down the line from here.

I don't want to go one bit, as I couldn't be better looked after than I am here, but he promises me it will only be for a few days. It's Army Regulations once again. Anyhow there's not the slightest cause to worry about me. I'll send my address from there if it seems worth while. Meanwhile Neville is taking over the House most nobly, and the association of the two for a week will do both good.

XX.

Thursday, Jan. 20th.

In an hour or two I shall be travelling in luxury on one of those beautiful Red Cross trains to Boulogne, or (if luck favours me) to Treport, for a little change and rest. There's nothing at all wrong bar that ridiculous old temperature, which refuses to go down unless I go down to the Base somewhere.

XXI.

A LETTER FROM A FELLOW-PATIENT TO MRS. CLAYTON.

No. 14, General Hospital,
Boulogne Base,
Friday, Jan. 21st.

DEAR MRS. CLAYTON, —

I am just writing to tell you that your son has been sent down to this Base Hospital with a bad attack of Malaria. He was very ill last night with a temperature of 104, but is a good deal better to-day, and the Doctor tells me that there is absolutely no cause for alarm. I have been sitting with him this afternoon and he seems much more himself. Strange to say he and I were together in his old parish for two years and now we find ourselves plumped down in the next room to one another at a Base Hospital! I hope in a day or two, when his head is a little better, he will be able to write to you himself. In the meantime, let me assure you that there is no need to worry. This is a splendid Hospital and we are well looked after.

Yours sincerely,
SYDNEY GROVES.

XXII.

No. 14 General Hospital,
Saturday, Jan. 22.

I'm practically all right again now—only a touch of temperature left, just enough to keep me in bed for a few days—the doctor said this morning that I should not be less than a fortnight. Personally I don't see how it's going to take so long as that. My work is waiting, and my going sick cripples Talbot's arrangements, shorthanded as he already is.

Everything here is one long conspiracy to spoil the blissful inmates. Crowds of nurses and R.A.M.C. looking in to remove a breadcrumb or insinuate a peach. However, I don't suppose it does any harm for a day or so, and it's very pleasant for a change.

XXIII.

The Collects referred to are those for Septuagesima and Sexagesima Sundays.

Sunday afternoon, Jan. 23rd.

I'm going on famously and sitting up in a chair for two hours on a perfect afternoon with a perfect view out towards Calais and the White Cliffs. Convalescence is certainly a real state of bliss, and everything and everybody are just splendid.

I had the joy of the Sacrament this morning and spent a quiet hour with a Prayer Book later. How true the Collects for to-day and next Sunday ring!

XXIV.

The strenuous routine of a hospital patient. The "*Ballad*" by Oscar Wilde is entitled *Ave Imperatrix*. The line which Tubby was quoting from memory tells how ". . . the measured roll of English drums beat at the gates of Kandahar." Some of the last stanzas run as follows:—

Wave and wild wind and foreign shore
Possess the flower of English land—
Lips that thy lips shall kiss no more,
Hands that shall never clasp thy hand. . . .

Where are the brave, the strong, the fleet?
Where is our English chivalry?
Wild grasses are their burial sheet,
And sobbing waves their threnody.

O loved ones lying far away,
What word of love can dead lips send!
O wasted dust! O senseless clay!
Is this the end! Is this the end!

Peace, peace! we wrong the noble dead
To vex their solemn slumbers so;
Though childless, and with thorn-crowned head,
Up the steep road must England go. . . .

Monday morning, Jan. 24th.

I'm to be allowed to dress this afternoon, and sit around as large as life. This is to-day's news, and at this rate of progress, I calculate I may after all get back to work before the end of the war!

Mornings in hospital are always rather uncanny. Here they wake you, apparently, shortly after midnight and give you tea, then someone comes in and washes you, and before you have time to settle down to sleep again, two people come in and make your bed. Then a man polishes the floor, then a V.A.D. (whose husband is D.D.M.S. 5th Army) dusts, then someone else takes your temperature (whether you have any or not), then the V.A.D. reappears with a bowl of lovely yellow gorse. By this time there are some signs of daylight, and just as you are settling down for a nap, in comes breakfast, followed by a barber, followed by the doctor on his morning rounds. One needs a splendid constitution to stand the strain of being sick in a hospital like this. They feed you on egg-flips about four times an hour and stand over you while you drain them to their soapy dregs.

One thing I've been meaning to ask for some time. Have you ever read that magnificent (and most uncharacteristic) Ballad of the English Empire, by Oscar Wilde of all people, in "*Bridges to Kipling*." If not will you do so, and then (1) either send me the copy, (2) get me another, or (3) get the last twenty stanzas or so copied out, beginning about "The wind-swept heights of Kandahar" to the end, which is quite supremely good—

"Peace, peace! ye wrong the noble dead
To vex their solemn slumber so.
Though childless, and with thorn crowned head
Up the steep slopes must England go."

FROM NEVILLE TALBOT TO TUBBY CLAYTON.

"*This exceedingly round hole*"—cf. Leonard Brown (*Tales* 117; 82): "Talbot House presented a most perfect illustration of 'a round peg in a round hole.' Those who know our innkeeper in the flesh have realised how round the peg was. But rotundity was no bar to activity: while activity was no bar to rotundity." "*The inspired Scotswoman*" is referred to in *Tales* (27; 29). "*May*" is, of course, Col. R. S. May of 6th Division "Q."

Talbot House (business as usual).

Jan. 25th.

My DEAR TUBBY,—

I can't say how glad I was to get your letter and to gather that you are really likely to arise and shine here again. We are, as it were, carrying on with oil lamps, the electric light having given out.

There are so many things I might tell you but you know the scattering effects of residence here.

But first, I have written to Gwynne to say that no fresh electric plant is needed but that I was keeping this exceedingly round hole open for its truly proper peg. As it happens the Senior Chaplain of Boulogne wrote me a little pæan about Buchanan (the Canada Railway Mission man), and so I have answered it on a p.c. and have added a word of strict injunction that you must be sent up again. In any case I have heard from Gwynne that if need be he approves of your staying on here.

The inspired Scotswoman keeps pouring things in—15 Bales arrived—beds, chairs, curtains, tablecloths, cutlery, china, cashboxes, &c., &c., and I don't know what. I try as well as I can to fill the shoes of your beautiful "feet"—they are that tho' not specially "on the mountains."

There was rather a crisis on Sunday at tea-time; the Divisional General and Brigade Major requiring tea upstairs and I downstairs with three men (C.E.M.S. rather went up the spout) the kitchen grappled at 5.15 p.m. with the situation of having its own tea. Corpl. Bradshaw handed in with the cash at 10 p.m. a written ultimatum of resignation, but neither he nor I have referred to it since.

The Wednesday service came off—and last night a concert—and the Sunday night service was as full as possible, with the General in the royal box. I haven't coped with the attic yet but long to.

I wish the house were bigger. I am getting more small tables—shall make the first landing into another man's room.

May came in yesterday to say that he had heard that our charges were excessive—but I expounded—and have since asked all comers and have had no confirmation. . . . If I can ever cope with accounts, I can see whether we could reduce expenses for 6th Div., but you and Bates must be repaid.

An aeroplane dropped a bomb at midnight up the street on Sunday night . . . much fuss since about lights showing at night.

Grand debate to-morrow on "Should the parsons fight?" I send on letters—have opened parcels including galumphshous pork (v. big pig) pie.

I feel depressed by hearing of the doings in London, as reported by people from Leave. Is this people's heart waxed gross, Tubby?

Must dry up—Have just had a *cor ad cor* talk to a Duke of Lancaster's Yeoman—in home trouble . . . all caught up in *cheveux de frise* of Balaam's ass, Shelley and Darwin.

Has the mere echo of a Tub been heard of before in history?

Ever affy.,

N. S. TALBOT.

XXVI.

14th General Hospital,
Tuesday, Jan. 15th, 12 midday.

I'm sitting up fully dressed and after lunch propose sunning myself on the sea shore for an hour if the weather holds.

I could go to Nice to convalesce, if I wanted to, but I should go with a bad conscience, as I shall be as right as rain in a few days, and back at work I hope by Sunday. It's not as if I were going back to great discomfort. Talbot House grows more luxurious every day, so that there's precious little hardship about it.

Only the neighbourhood is like all of Flanders I've seen, flat and wet, so that it does not breathe vigour into the limbs of lassitude. But by Saturday I shall be very fit—if not, I shall wait a day or so longer.

XXVII.

FROM NEVILLE TALBOT TO MRS. CLAYTON.

A few weeks later "*the Div.*" did move, and Tubby was left "*ensconced*" in Poperinghe (see Letter xxxiv).

Talbot House,
Jan. 27th.

DEAR MRS. CLAYTON,

I have heard from the maker of this House, and he vows he'll be up again within a fortnight, and I hope he will, for it's just his job. If the Div. moves I shall, I think, leave him ensconced here.

Yours sincerely,
 N. S. TALBOT.

XXVIII.

14 G.H.
Thursday, Jan. 27th.

I arise after the usual breakfast in bed, and other luxuries, *e.g.*, warm bath at 11 a.m. This is I hope the last day but one of my slack, as I mean to get back on Saturday. Plainly there's plenty of work waiting for me up the line; so I'll get back there as quick as I can, and come on proper leave later if I possibly can. So from now onwards please consider that my life resumes its normal course at Talbot House, and my address as before.

I've had a good rest and a good read, and can now go back joyfully to my real job. It's impossible not to be fond of Neville; he is both a leader and a real friend, full of humour and sense and earnestness, and utterly incapable of anything petty.

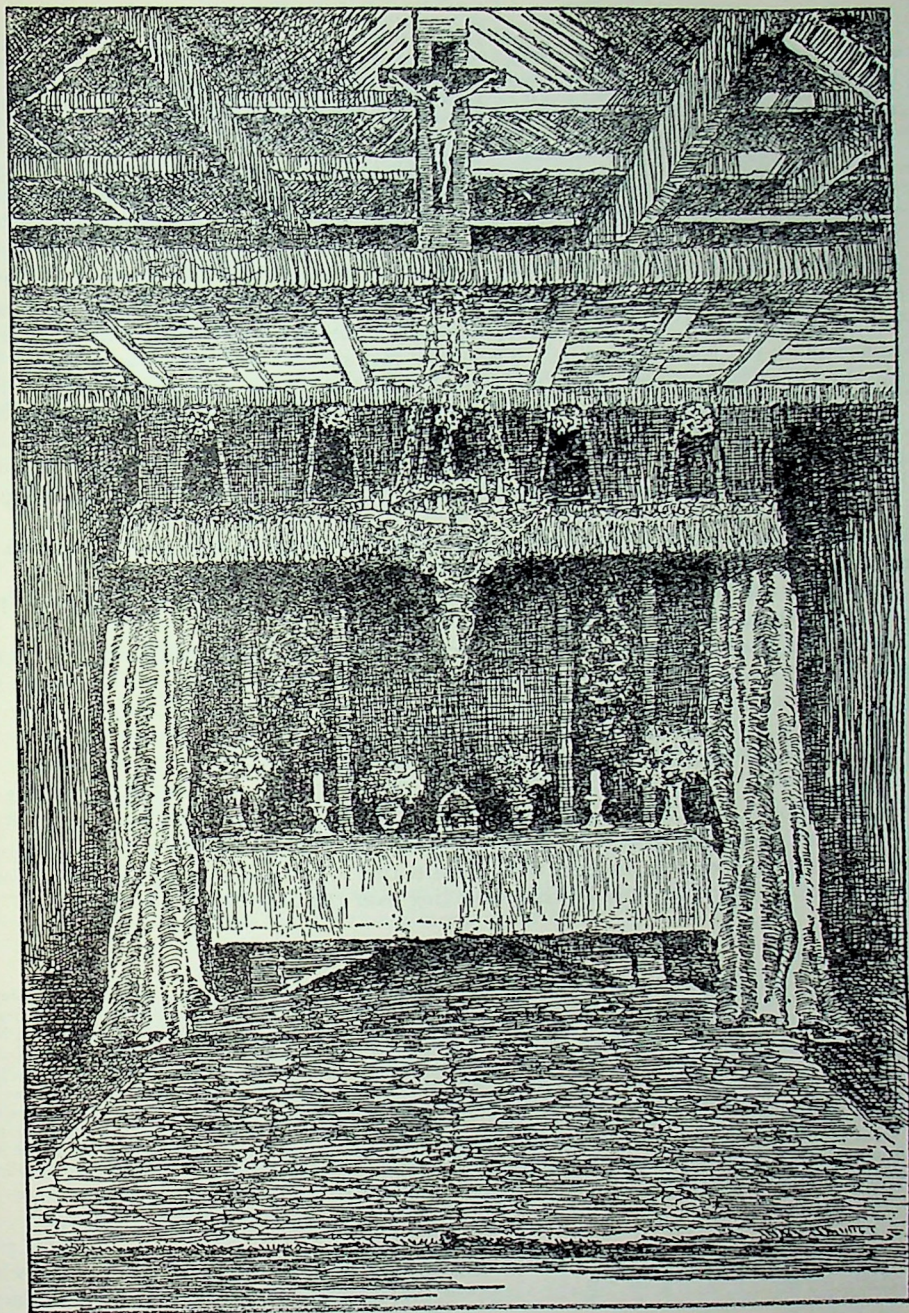
XXIX.

Talbot House,
Tuesday, Feb. 1, 1916.

All right, and very happy to be back. Will write properly in a day or so.

XXX.

"For the first fortnight," says *Tales* (67; 51), "the Chapel of Talbot House was on the floor below the attic"—but the move to the "Upper Room" seems in reality to have taken some seven weeks. At Christmas time Tubby was contemplating the move (see Letter xiii), but a month later Neville Talbot still laments that he had not been able yet to "cope with the attic" (see Letter xxv). The present letter announces that the "Upper Room" is in being. Padre Crisford of the London Rifle Brigade finally insisted on the change, and the Queen's Westminster machine-gunners fitted up the red "*hangings from the Bishop's Chapel at Southwark*" (*i.e.*, the private Chapel of Bishop Talbot of Winchester, previously of Southwark. *Tales* 69; 53), while one of their signallers, Lance-Corporal Lowman, made the first sketch of the Carpenter's Bench, which was then translated into a pen-drawing by E. W. Charlton and is here reproduced. The only other pictures of the Upper Room known to Toc H were both made in 1917—the water-colour by Kenneth Barfield, familiar to members in coloured reproduction, and a drawing, reproduced for the first time in the *JOURNAL* of May, 1924,



by Cyril Worsley, of whom nothing was known until, we are happy to say, he got into touch with Tubby again in May, 1926. The photographs mentioned in Letter xli (7.7.) are not known to us in Toc II. In 1921 the Imperial War Museum commissioned H. H. Cawood to make a scale model of the Upper Room in which, working on Barfield's picture, measurements taken on the spot in Poperinghe, and reference to the Chapel at Mark I, he succeeded admirably. This model is now exhibited at South Kensington and a replica of it in the porch of All Hallows, Barking-by-the-Tower (see illustration in the January JOURNAL, 1925.) The white and blue frontal, shewn in Barfield's picture and still in use at Mark I, came from home in time for Easter, 1916 (see Letter xli), and many gifts were to follow later. (*Tales* 30, 67; 31, 51, and Tubby's cyclostyled "little guide," to be found in the Mark I Chapel).

By the summer of this year "*finance*" was not "*going well*," and the demand by Second Army H.Q. for audited accounts nearly brought the House to an untimely end (*Tales* 113; 80). The "*Taube*" (which, being translated, ironically means a "dove") was the most familiar make of German plane, watching the movements of troops, etc., behind the line. For "*debates*" see *Teles* (40; 37).

Feb. 3rd.

Things are in full swing again: ten officers in last night, going on leave and ten sad ones this morning returning. All, sad and merry, requiring beds and breakfasts. The last has just finished, paid his five francs and gone. They are a very nice lot and well repay trouble. Over two hundred have stopped here since Dec. 20th! Then there is the men's side of things. Some five hundred use the Recreation and Writing rooms every day. We have moved the Chapel into the attic, which makes a perfectly beautiful Church, with hangings from the Bishop's Chapel at Southwark. We have a daily Celebration at 7.15 which means I am getting to bed earlier and a faithful few are beginning to come in regularly. Evensong at 7.15 at night is well attended.

Finance is going well, and out of a/cs covering 1,800 francs for last month, I was only 15 centimes out. We can now practically pay off all our debts on the house.

A *Taube* over the town this morning may mean shelling this afternoon—this is the only disadvantage of these beautiful spring days.

A very jolly debate last night in which women's suffrage was heavily defeated in a crowded house.

XXXI.

Tubby's resumption of work is short-lived: he goes on sick-leave.

Tuesday, Feb. 8th.

You will probably have had a wire by now telling you of my change of plans. I am coming home on leave at once, crossing to-morrow, Wednesday. I have still got a certain amount of malaria hanging about me, and the doctor insists that it's no good trying to pick up here.

Neville, who is as good as any brother, is taking over the helm here once again.

XXXII.

After a gap of nearly a month, during which Tubby was at home, the tale is resumed. For the *oil-stove* incident see *Tales* (47; 40: "Ultimately I became so nervous of these ordeals that I walked only by night in the Guards area, and then said 'Friend' hurriedly in the dark to the buttresses of the church"). The "*stuff*" referred to were "an N.C.O. and four men of the 17th Field Ambulance" (*Tales* 46; 40). Neville Talbot's plan of becoming a voluntary prisoner of war in Germany did not materialise. The situation he wanted to cope with is illustrated in a letter, written to Tubby in 1919 by a member who, after using the Chapel of Talbot House in March, 1918, was captured on the Somme in the following month: "Never," he writes, "until I got behind the German lines did I realise the great pity that we are so separated from the Roman branch of the Church. There was I needing so badly the Sacraments of the Church, and there was a priest celebrating the very Sacred Mysteries I needed badly, and yet because I was C. of E. I was out of it all." There is no record as to whether Tubby or the Deputy Chaplain General persuaded Lord Salisbury (later to become a Trustee of Toc II) to "oblige" on this occasion!

Talbot House,

March 7th.

I'm just off shopping, a queer proceeding in this neighbourhood, requiring a knowledge of French or Flemish, and after all the shopping is accomplished there is the fearful business of

getting the stuff home. No shops send anything—at least if they do, it is always brought by engaging young ladies who scandalise the staff by sitting in the hall and waiting for *M. le Capitaine*. If, on the other hand, I carry it home myself, I infringe all Army Orders. Yesterday morning I did so, and ran the gauntlet of the early morning streets with an oil stove, and a miscellaneous parcel of tools. Of course I met, besides many painfully respectful Tommies, a party of Guards who gave me a paralysing “eyes right!” I could only gasp and hurry on.

Two of the staff—both day orderlies—are on the sick list, which makes the household very short-handed. And I have great fears that all the staff will be recalled to their ambulance, when the Division goes into rest; in which case Pettifer and I shall hold the fort together. Though we can and shall have to get new hands, it won't be the same thing for the time.

Neville, I fear, is going to leave us altogether. He has offered himself as a Chaplain to our prisoners in Germany, and will probably be accepted. The sacrifice is almost as great for us as for him.

Meanwhile all goes well—no shelling the town for several days—I touch wood—and the House crammed from morning to night, and the Services growing in attendance steadily.

To-morrow, the D.C.G. is bringing Lord Salisbury here to tea. I only hope he'll clear out before the singsong at 6.30, or still better, perform.

XXXIII.

The “*six-foot men*” refers to the Guards Division and “*Jonah*” to Padre Llewellyn Jones, who had taken Tubby's intended place with them (see Letter iii); they now moved into Poperinghe, replacing Tubby's “*own folk*,” the 6th Division.

Talbot House,

March 10th.

Just a line or two before the room gets full of young N.C.O.'s from the Division School of Instruction who are coming into tea between their lectures. Such jolly chaps of the very best type: they nearly brought the Chapel floor down on Sunday with their numbers.

Everything here is excellent except the shelling which is more frequent than of old; and the snow (which however stops the aeroplanes here as with you). The House is indescribably full, mostly now of six foot men, as Jonah and his lot have moved up. Talbot and my own folk go away for a rest next week—right back—so I shan't see them for a month, as I stick by the House. But if old friends go for a while, new friends come and comradeship grows quickly in this atmosphere.

Lent arrangements are rather difficult to make, but we have little bits of extra services and must develop on these lines as occasion warrants.

XXXIV.

“*Garrison Chaplain*” of Poperinghe Tubby remained until the end of the War. The D.C.G. was wont to refer to him, unofficially, as “the Bishop of Poperinghe”; and the Editor finds a carbon copy (in an old “*Army Book 152*”) of a letter he himself wrote a month before the Armistice to “My Rev. Father in God, Tubby, Pop. Episcop., Talbot House.” “*Neville and Co.*” means, of course, the 6th Division and “*the prisoners' camp*” refers to Neville's plan (see Letter xxxii).

Friday, March 13th.

I'm very fit and happy, but uniquely busy without a moment to myself for the time being. Owing to the general post now, I can't write more than a word till next week, when I shall have settled down as Garrison Chaplain here—they are inventing this post for me so that I can stop here. Neville and Co. go off to-morrow, there's no more news about the prisoners' camp yet—I hope it won't go through.

XXXV.

The “*fluctuation*” of the staff was caused by the change of Divisions. The original staff (excepting always “the Gen.”

whom the Buffs managed to "lose" to Tubby permanently) were replaced by "Guardsmen under Sergeant Godley of the Coldstreamers" (now of Toc H, Portsmouth. He was one of the "actors" in Episode iv, laid in the Old House, of the Birthday Masque in the Albert Hall, December, 1925. *Tales* 46; 40.) Of these "wonderful folk" Tubby afterwards wrote (*Tales* 48-49; 41-42), "The Guards were not only admirable—they were actually lovable. In no division that ever came our way was there so strong a family feeling. . . . Of the many conquests of the Guards in this War, none was more complete than that of Talbot House. We dreaded their arrival, but longed for their return." "*Parrot and James' pie*" was sent out by the firm of that name in Southampton.

March 20th.

I've treated you very badly lately but it's nothing to my other debts in correspondence. In a week or so I hope to be straighter and freer. My real trouble is the fluctuation of my staff; though the Brass Hats are very kind in every way, I can't get another permanent staff yet, and with a house full to overflowing, both officers and men, I have to keep at it pretty hard myself and scarcely ever get into my parish for visiting. However, I've now written to Bishop Gwynne and asked for a really permanent staff, if he can get it for me. Meanwhile the great Division to which I was originally going has instead come to me and I get a stiff neck craning up to talk to them. They are wonderful folk, and by no means as unapproachable from my point of view as I feared; though of course they are not malleable like the young Army. I have a company of the best next door, who simply live in Talbot House, and I am officially their chaplain for the time being. Really my status is quite odd—as I'm more of a Garrison Chaplain than anything, subject to no Division. All my old friends are back at rest; so there's new ground waiting fallow all round, as soon as I can get time to tackle it.

Meanwhile, the garden looms large in my projects—a Badminton Court in the kitchen garden for officers and the repainting of the summer house for their delectation; and weeding and pruning everywhere. The town is very peaceful at present, our friends having apparently need of their long range guns at Verdun. Aeroplanes came over this morning and had a fight while I was shaving, but dropped nothing. The weather is perfect and the wall fruit trees and roses need a lot of wisdom that is beyond me. The Band is coming into the garden as soon as we have got it straight, every afternoon more or less, so we shall be cheerier than ever. My old Div. Headquarters gave me a second piano before they left, so I have got one going in the men's room, another in the officers' and two gramophones! These with the Band in the garden, and the harmonium in the Chapel, are calculated to attract notice to the House!

Have you a good tip for making lemonade in large quantities? I can get lemons, but we have to boil the water, and have not too much in any case. Three Brass Hats, glorious remnants of my own folk, blew in for lunch on Saturday; but a Parrot and James' pie was ready for them. Good Services yesterday, quite a crowd of officers of all sorts; the Chapel is really amazingly beautiful.

Now I must go and tackle the garden, which I think and hope is going to be not only a great delight to my guests, but also a great source of recreation for me.

My services yesterday were; 8 a.m. Celebration for Corps officers and men; 8.30 small Parade for Labour Battalion, great pals of mine; 10.30 Full Parade of my other Labour Battalion, R.E.; 11.30 Choral Eucharist here; 1 p.m., start in a car with Harmonium for a siege Battery; 2 p.m., service there; 3.15, another siege Battery; 5.30, Evensong at Corps Headquarters; 6.30, Evensong here. A splendid day of work and joy.

XXXVI.

"Percy" was a monster German long-range gun, on a "railway mounting" which ran him up to fire, and back into safety between the rounds. It is recorded that he conducted the first shelling of Poperinghe on April 24, 1915 (see H.A.T.'s notes in August JOURNAL, 1924, p. 227). His counterpart on our side used, at a later stage in the War, to make trips up and down in front of Hazebrouck so as to fire across Ypres, and no doubt became as great a "household word" to the Germans. For the "beer" of Poperinghe see *Tales* (10; 19). The "*floral postcards*" were fearful and wonderful "souvenirs," embroidered in bright silks,—patriotically with the flags of the Allies, or sentimentally with forget-me-nots and legends like "To my dear old Dad": they deserve a place in the Imperial War Museum.

March 24th.

Life is easing down a bit, and we are rejoicing in our immunity from the daily ration of shells in the town, owing to "Percy" being temporarily indisposed. Either someone has hit his little railway line so that he cannot take his constitutional, or he has gone for a star turn down South. Anyhow, he's no loss. Meanwhile the shops open up gaily amid the battered houses, and sell anything they can, mainly beer which is the colour and consistency of bath-water, and floral postcards of coloured silk, in which the soul of Tommy takes high delight.

I had a very touching experience on Wednesday, of the kind that really helps one. The day before, while I was helping to try and reduce our wilderness into something like the garden it once was, an *Abbé* accompanied by a Belgian Officer came to call. The purpose of their visit was to ask me to officiate at the funeral of a Belgian Artilleryman who had been killed the night before, and who was believed to be an English Churchman.

On Wednesday afternoon, in the pouring rain, I went, accompanied by Sergt. Newton of the Coldstreams. We arrived in good time at the Belgian Hospital and opening the main door found ourselves at once in the Chapel, the hall of the ex-chateau. Here lay the coffin under the Belgian Flag. Behind it, a beautiful kind of Lenten veil screened the sanctuary. I robed in the Matron's room, which had flowers and pictures and a general air of sweetness and light so strange after the usual billets, and then returned to the Chapel, to find it full of Belgian soldiers in their metal hats; about twenty officers and the matron and sisters were also there on the steps facing me. Here I took the first part of the Prayer Book service slowly, trying so to inflect it that it should not sound meaningless to those who knew no English, then we passed out into the rain half a mile to the Belgian and British Military Cemetery.

Six bearers carried the coffin and all followed regardless of rain. Arrived at the place, which was looking its worst, the coffin was set down at the shallow end of the long trench, where the Belgians bury their dead side by side. I began the second part of the Service but paused after the "Suffer us not for any pains of death to fall from thee." It was well I did so, as otherwise we should have missed an incident that I shall never forget. The Commandant of the Battery stepped forward and with bare head began to speak in slow and simple French. I never heard a speech that moved me more. From first to last it was addressed to the dead man, and had a ring of patriotism and pathos that I could not attempt to reproduce. In effect, it was an exhortation to confidence and quiet courage, that the qualities which he had shewn in life so well, might still sustain his soul. "Take heart, *cher camarade*, the cause in which you have given your life shall not be lost. *La force barbare* shall be thrust back whence it came. Never fear concerning that. Perhaps the thought of her you love, of the two little ones, and of *l'un qui vient* (his unborn child) is troubling you. Have no fear, dear comrade, so long as one of us is left, they shall be cared for. And you for your part, who passed death's gate, would bid us be of good cheer and go back to the guns you served so well knowing that, come life or death, there lies beyond a glorious future for our country and for all who suffer in the one great cause."

This *precis* is a poor travesty of the real words, I shall always remember the pathos of the "*écoutez vous?*" interjected from time to time, and the tone in which "*la force barbare*" was said. After this, I completed my part saying the Pater Noster in hopes they might be glad of the familiar words even in my English-Latin. Then in place of our bugle call, with the weird grandeur of its missing note, from General downwards stepped forward and put a spadeful of earth now lying in its shallow grave. I walked back with the matron, who told me something of the story, a story of private sacrifice of which the war has so many to its credit. A Belgian nobleman by birth had in his boyhood lived in England and joined our Church. From England he had gone to Canada, where at the outbreak of war he had been prosperous and happily married. Even then he had felt the call of the little country he had

only seen with child-eyes, and selling his estate, brought his wife and children to London. For more than a year he had served as a volunteer in this Belgian Battery, spending his leave in England, where his wife was living on the slender capital created by the sale of the Canadian estate. She, poor lady, expects another child in a few weeks' time and their friend did not know whether to break the news or not. I offered, of course, to write to her, but the Matron told me that it would be wiser to wait a while. Then, she said with a sad smile, "Please do so. My only son was killed last autumn, and I know how a few details help one at such a time."

As I came along, I felt two simple emotions, the first was concerning this stranger and his story; and the wonderful way in which our own Church was there to gather its adopted son to itself at the last. But the dominant impression was, that left by the Commandant's speech. How truly and how simply the French and the Belgians understand the issues of it all, the urgency of the need, the greatness of the cause!

XXXVII.

FROM NEVILLE TALBOT TO TUBBY CLAYTON.

A projected visit from Neville to Talbot House. "*Pook*" was his batman, "*John*" a draught horse, and "*Jumbo*" his chestnut charger—a horse built on a scale to fit Neville's own 6 ft. 5 ins. It may have been this visit which gave rise to a story worth rescuing from oblivion:—On a bright moonlight night, very late, Neville, on *Jumbo's* back, stands outside the front door of the Old House, having a last few words with Tubby. Round the corner of the street, steering an uncertain course from some *estaminet*, comes a belated private soldier. Opposite Talbot House he stops and leans against the wall to contemplate Neville and *Jumbo*, and is heard to exclaim at last, "Strike me pink! Camels in Flanders!"

March 28th.

DEAR TUBBY,—

It is a great weight in the scales which at the moment are deeply drooping in the melancholia of address-preparation, that I shall be meeting you again. What I purpose is, Hussar *Pook*, John and the Cart shall trek to-morrow and establish themselves in the Aviary more or less . . . the cart in your back drive really . . . *Pook* to sleep in the cart . . . he could draw perhaps on T.H. cuisine for a snack or two.

I and *Jumbo*—who has of late been through wire and water (on pavements . . . an awful shy and slip up yesterday . . . and a plunge into barbed wire 3 or 4 days ago) will arrive by 5 p.m. J. to play the part of large canary in the Aviary . . . and I to play mine in the chapel. So things might be for 2 nights . . . for I shall stay if I may, Thursday night, in order to see you, and so back here on Friday morning.

John, I may explain, draws the cart and is no fool. If I don't bring *Pook* and cart, I don't quite know how really I could feed *Jumbo*, and by bringing J. I am independent in my movements.

Ever affy.,

N. S. TALBOT.

XXXVIII.

"No. 16" is, of course, No. 16 General Hospital at Treport (see Letter i).

Talbot House,

Saturday, April 1st, 1916.

I look forward to a really happy busy day to-morrow. Let me sketch my programme:—

8 a.m., I shall probably attend the Celebration here and assist a fellow Chaplain, and all the Corps people will be there.

9.30 a.m., a small parade of a company of a Labour Battalion here; they are great pals of mine and have lent me an excellent L. Corporal who has been working day by day in the garden for weeks past.

10.30 a.m., a full parade of another Labour Battalion, my old one.

11.30 a.m., Choral Celebration.

12.30, lunch (with some rhubarb out of the garden).

1 p.m., start in car for a siege battery.

2 p.m., service there : and harmonium carried in car.

3.15 p.m., another siege battery.

5.30 p.m., service at Corps Headquarters.

6.30, Evening Service here.

It sounds a jolly day ; and I shall try and talk about Mothering Sunday most of the time. By a fortunate coincidence, I have just reached the 3rd Word from the Cross, the course I'm taking on Sunday evenings.

Neville came on Jumbo, and was splendid. Now that the town is so peaceful, the owner is exhibiting a desire to return to his house, so I am in the odd position of having to hope for a little shelling to keep him quiet !

Now I must try and get things straight for to-morrow, before tea. Who do you think is coming ? Why a jolly corporal who was a Confirmation candidate of mine at No. 16 in September. He came and discovered me yesterday, and yesterday evening another link with No. 16 turned up in the person of a young lieutenant, who I knew well there as an R.A.M.C. orderly.

XXXIX.

The Earl of Cavan was at that time commanding XIV Corps : he has, of course, since the War been Chief of the Imperial General Staff. He was destined to become one of the first Vice-Presidents of Toc H, and to write the Foreword to *Tales of Talbot House*, in which he recorded, from personal experience, how "Welcome met me at the door, Happiness lived within, and the Peace that passeth understanding could be found by those who sought it in the Upper Chamber." Speaking in Woolwich Town Hall at the time of the opening of Mark XV he described a visit of his own to the Chapel of Talbot House, and "how, in the quietness of that place, the anxieties of a critical moment of the War dropped away from him" (*JOURNAL*, January, 1925, p. 18). "*Victor Hamblin*" is now at an Indian Mission School, and "*Cecil Pokins*" is a member at Leeds.

Wednesday night, April 5th.

To-day, I lunched with Cavan at Corps Headquarters, a great honour ; and no one could have been kinder. He is going out of his way to do me kindnesses ; especially he is securing for me, by personal application, two R.A.M.C. boys I greatly need on my staff here. One, Victor Hamblin of Mirfield whom I got to know and be fond of while his audience was in these parts, and secondly Cecil Vokins from No. 16 Gen. Hos., my right-hand man there : with these and Pettifer, my anxieties about the staff should be in a fair way of ending. This is far more than I ever hoped for, and makes the future very bright.

Sunday was a great day and all my nine services went well. As I left one heavy battery in the afternoon, they started firing again, and as I was at the time only about twenty yards from the nose of the gun (pointing of course almost vertically) I got the full benefit of the performance, and nearly fell out of the car. The harmonium came to pieces, but this was not due to fright on its part so much as the roughness of the roads. However, some jolly Signaller boys mended it for me on Monday.

XL.

Unhappily six weeks later "*fever*" was destined to return and to send Tubby out of the House for his longest period of absence (see Letter xlv). Neville Talbot duly arrived for Good Friday—see the next Letter.

Monday, April 10th.

Life is very happy ; I'm amazingly fit, no sign of fever or other ill : and really the work is a joy such as few can have at present. The little Church is getting known and loved, and

folk turn to it naturally, e.g., this afternoon an utter stranger, an officer, came in and asked shyly if he might go up to the Chapel and be quiet. I, in response, asked if I could be any help if I went up to him there. He accepted gladly, and after a little time I followed him. It turned out he had just had news of his father's death at home. The news had been delayed in reaching him owing to his regiment moving, and the funeral was to be at 3 this afternoon. So at 3 in the Chapel I held the Burial Service, with a quiet congregation of one: and he went back to his regiment I think with his sorrow somewhat assuaged.

Yesterday's services were full of joy and promise. The chapel is really needed, and since we scrubbed and whitewashed it last week, is amazingly beautiful. We have made stained glass windows out of a roll of Sunday School pictures.

Neville has wired accepting my invitation to take the Three Hours here. I hope it is not too ambitious to try and hold it seven miles from the line.

XLI.

For "*Sergt. Godley*" see Letter xxxv: "*the two beloved boys*" were Victor Hamblin and Cecil Vokins (see Letters xxxix and xlii). "*Gardner*" was Godfrey Gardner, of the Suffolk Regiment, killed on the Somme in 1916: he had been organist of the Royal Philharmonic Society (*Tales* 75; 56). For "*Neville's Three Hours*" service see *Tales* (75; 56). It is there recorded that "*Cavan*" sat between a lieutenant and a private. "Only the day before there had been bloody doings near the Canal at Boesinghe, when a company of the Bedfords had been blown by a whirlwind concentration out of a miserable travesty of a trench—E. 35, I think—and the tale of the Agony and Darkness fell upon our ears with a new sense of kinship." "*Easter Day, 1916*," wrote Tubby in *Tales* (77; 57), "I shall always regard as the happiest of my ministry." The "*flowers*" which "*poured in*" came not only from home but were "gathered in the ruined gardens of Ypres and Goldfish Chateau by our own men" and "also great bunches of bloom from some Belgian Nuns hard by" (*Tales* 76; 57): the "*lovely frontal*" has been referred to in the note to Letter xxx. For "*the reality of churchmanship among the Canadians*" see *Tales* (63; 61). The offertory to the "*Wais's and Strays*" provided, in the three successive years of the House's life, "more than the yearly maintenance" of a little girl, Hannah Mitchell: for "the most affectionate solicitude among small and great" for this unseen adopted child of the House see *Tales* (85; 62). The "*Colonel of a Brigade of Heavy Artillery*" was Colonel Hutchinson, and the "*Battery*" in question was at Fantasio Farm, beyond Elverdinghe (*Tales* 78; 58). "*One of our old night orderlies*" was "Colwell, a dear old orderly of the House," who was lying at No. 17 C.C.S. "on (or rather off) the Abcde Road," (*Tales* 81; 59). "*Photographing*"—or the mere possession of a camera—was, of course, strictly forbidden, except by special permit, throughout the B.E.F.: the picture of the "*garden*" and back of the House, taken on this day, was duly reproduced in the first edition of *Tales* (opposite p. 35) and one or two photographs of the interior are to be seen in Toc H "Marks" to-day. The photographs of the Chapel were sent to Neville's parents, and Mrs. Talbot wrote from home to Tubby on May 10, warmly thanking him for them, but Toc H possesses no copies (see Letter xxx).

Easter Monday (April 24th).

It is 9.15 p.m. I am alone, and have just finished supper and my post-prandial canteen accounts with Sergt. Godley, my senior N.C.O. and Chief of Staff. This always ends up with a gossip, as he is a most delightful fellow. I only wish I could keep him. However, when the two beloved boys come whom Cavan is moving mountains to secure for me, these and Pettifer will hold the fort whoever comes and goes.

It is the first night I have been alone for a week, as Gardner, a Lieut. in my old Division, was living with me last week, and has to-day rejoined his regiment. He was a really jolly fellow, and an amazingly good musician, so that his presence at our little groan-box in the organ loft all last week has been of the greatest value.

We had quite a wonderful week—thirty or so at Evensong every night, and about fifty at Neville's Three Hours (including Cavan), and on Saturday the Chapel was transformed into the most perfect place of worship in Belgium. We draped the altar on Good Friday with a roll of crepe. On Saturday flowers poured in from home, and a lovely frontal came to order from Holy Cross Court, Hayward's Heath. So everything for Easter was exceedingly magnifical. And Easter day was worth it. We had about 270 Communicants, the Divisional General, most of the Staff, Brigadiers, Colonels, Bandsmen, Signallers, Railway men, R.A.M.C., A.S.C., M.T., R.E.'s, Infantry, Motor Machine Gunners, Heavy Gunners, Armourers, Army

Ordnance men, Red Cross folk, and even a Sergt. of the A.V.C. If the Chapel floor had collapsed at 8, 9.30 or 11.30 (as it ought to have done by all laws of gravity) practically every branch of the Army here would have had its representative in the common ruin! The 11.30 service I shall always remember, as indeed I think will all those who were there—about a hundred, half of whom had returned to give thanks for their Communion earlier. We sang Merbecke and Easter hymns all through, and the real reverence of all was most marked. I had help at 6.30, 7, and 8, but was alone for 9.30 and 11.30 except for Servers in uniform. But no one found the service too long, I am certain. Believe me, the old Church isn't half so moribund as some folk seem to think; and the reality of Churchmanship among the Canadians is a most significant and inspiring fact.

The Offertory totalled £10, which is divided between the Convent of the Holy Cross (for the Frontal, &c.), and the Prisoners of War fund. As a result of our Lenten Offertories, another £10 has gone to the Waifs and Strays.

Before the 11.30 service ended the Colonel of a Brigade of Heavy Artillery was waiting for Gardner and the harmonium and myself. We lunched with him at Headquarters, some miles out—such a jolly party—and then held the Easter Service there; thence at 3 p.m. we went up to a Battery I had not visited before (I vary my suburban existence every Sunday afternoon by Battery Services), and although the Boche was making the roads unpleasant, succeeded in reaching the spot. A Boche plane however evidently thought the folded harmonium a suspicious object, as it hung overhead, so that we had to wait for an hour in a sandbagged retreat while they shelled the field on our left with great gusto. Then we got to our ruined stable and had a fine service. We then had tea, and after another delay from a similar cause, got safely home just in time for Evensong. The moment I reached Talbot House, Pettifer told me that one of our old night orderlies, a splendid R.A.M.C. fellow, had been badly hit and wanted to see me that night in the Casualty Clearing Station. So I wrote a desperate chit to the C.O. Motor Machine Gunners, who had been at Communion in the morning, asking for a cycle car at 8 p.m. Then we had a glorious Evensong, with the Chapel recklessly overfull again, after which I swallowed some coffee and climbed into the place behind where the machine gun should be, and tilted down the road full pitch to C.C.S. We couldn't find the thing, so I left the side-car with its jolly Scotch driver to solace himself with a cigar, and proceeded along a railway line I knew would bring me to it. Here I found that my way was blocked by an empty goods train, which took it into its head to have a particularly bulging wagon at the very spot where it crossed a trestle bridge over a slow and smelly stream. I therefore had to crawl in my fur coat under the wagon along the track across the open sleepers, hoping meanwhile that no one would try shunting the train. No one did, and I emerged safely, found the C.C.S., knocked up an R.A.M.C. captain I knew there, found the boy in his ward doing well, in spite of a bit of shrapnel through his lung. I re-emerged into the night, retraced my steps, negotiated the bridge again, found my cycle car, and whirled back to a late and glorious supper of soup and tinned sausages. After which I subsequently retired to bed. Quite a jolly Easter day of the right kind. To-day, I have been slacking. We had four Communicants all right at 7.15 a.m.; after breakfast, I did the accounts all the morning, superintended the photographing (by special permit) of the garden, house and Chapel all the afternoon, walked down to another C.C.S. for tea with a dear old friend from No. 16 who is Matron, saw the boy (still going well) on my way back; then boarded an empty train going my way and called on various units on my road back from the station, to Evensong here at 7.15 p.m. Since then, nothing but supper, the Sergt., and this scribble.

To-morrow, I hope to take all our Easter flowers to the British Cemetery here, and have a Confirmation Class at 6 p.m. Otherwise another slack day.

XLII.

"The adjoining house" had been occupied by "A" Mess of the Guards Division, and now became the Officers' Club of Poperinghe, run by Neville. In 1917 it was handed over to the Expeditionary Force Canteens "who maintained it until the evacuation in the Spring of the following year" (*Tales* 50; 42). The "conference of the (Second) Army" would be held at Cassel, on the top of its steep conical hill, 10 miles west of Poperinghe over the French frontier, where Lord Plumer's H.Q. in a shabby casino dominated the old town and all the surrounding country for miles. For "No. 16 G.H." see note on Letter i. In place of the "two weeks leave" in June, Tubby found himself before the end of May in hospital again at Boulogne (see Letter xlv).

Saturday (May 6th).

Only a word or two now. Neville is back from leave and we are coping with the big problem of extending Talbot House into an adjoining House; he to run the Officers' Club, and I the men's. We went yesterday to a Conference of the Army at ——— where Talbot House of the present was highly commended, and the extension approved.

Both my boys secured for me permanently by Cavan's kindness—Cecil Vokins from No. 16 G.H. and Victor Hamblin from a F.A., have arrived. The rest of my delightful staff will, I fear, move with their Division. On Wednesday I am going for two days to revisit No. 16 G.H., a long journey but a great joy. And in June, I find I am entitled to *two weeks* leave, my year as a C.F. being completed in a few weeks now. This is great news, and I must simply do my part in getting the new work started here before I come.

Now I'm off to lunch with some jolly Motor Machine Gunners and superintend the erection of a little altar in their field for a Celebration in the open air to-morrow.

XLIII.

Monday, May 15th.

Only a word, as I must to bed. I had a splendid time at No. 16 and here the Archbishop of Canterbury is coming to meet the hundred Chaplains of the Army on Wednesday afternoon, and afterwards Confirm about thirty candidates—one of mine has this morning received his mention in despatches!

XLIV.

"Major Philbey," of the Yorks. and Lancs., was one of the "great quiet helpers of the infant House" (*Tales* 22; 26). This incident of the Confirmation of "four of his men" on May 17 going on at the time of his own death up the line has been finely told by Tubby in an article in *The Road*, reprinted in our JOURNAL, August, 1925, p. 232. "The Sergt. who got the D.C.M." was Hazelhurst, who went back to his death in the line a week later; one of the others, Pte. Wyard, was killed soon after; and nothing further is known of the other two, Cpl. Hollies and L.-Cpl. Field. The original scribbled list of men presented by Tubby at this Confirmation (3 candidates from the Guards, 2 from the Sherwoods, the 4 from the Yorks and Lancs., 2 from Corps troops and 1 Canadian gunner) survives and now hangs in All Hallows, Barking-by-the-Tower. During the existence of the House in Poperinghe "some eight hundred men" were confirmed in the Chapel, and "nearly fifty baptised" (*Tales* 82; 60); the oak Confirmation chair, now in Mark I Chapel, was not in use until 1917 (*Tales* 71; 54).

(? About May 20th.)

Pettifer is waiting for the post, so I must hurry. All here goes well, except for one great sorrow in the death of Major Philbey, D.S.O., whom your friends knew. He was a great friend of mine, and a great hero of the true and quiet kind. A shy and gentle man, amazingly brave, and as thoughtful of his men as if they were his brothers. They simply loved him.

On Wednesday the Archbishop confirmed four of his men (the Sergt. who got the D.C.M. was one of them), and about two hours afterwards he was killed in front of the front line. It was by his special arrangement that they were left with transport lines for their Confirmation classes while the regiment went up. The eventful Wednesday was a great success here, about 150 Chaplains gathering in the garden and having tea, talk, and service. After they had gone, we had the Confirmation of thirty-seven candidates. Cantuar was perfectly delightful, and as simple as a Mission preacher with them.

I kept most of my chaps—ten of them out of fourteen—here the night by special leave. They slept in the garden, after a wonderful little preparation service late at night, and there were about twenty at their first Communion at 7.15 a.m. on Thursday.

Now we are trying to get Neville's new House in order—it's a splendid place and only four doors away. It's badly wanted—I had seventy-six Officers on my hands last night—over fifty for breakfast—the staff are almost off their legs. But it all emphasises the need of the new house.

XLV.

The next three letters are written from hospital, the first at a C.C.S. *en route* for No. 14 General Hospital, at Wimereux, near Boulogne.

Wednesday, May 24th.

My old "thorn in the flesh" the malaria business has suddenly laid me by the leg again, and after finishing a fine Sunday at Talbot House, I collapsed with annoying suddenness, and am now here for a few hours, *en route* as last Feb., I expect, for No. 14 General Hospital at Wimereux. They say it'll take at least a fortnight. The most miserable part of this business is that dear Neville was just wading into his new work, and now will be left with all mine to do as well. I wish you would write to him and apologise for the broken reediness of Tubby.

XLVI.

For the "*February escapade*" (which began on January 19) see Letters xix-xxviii.

No. 14 General Hospital,

Thursday, May 25th.

As I prophesied, the hospital train repeated the history of my February escapade and brought me to the same floor, almost the same room, in the same hospital looking out towards Folkestone. The sisters have changed, and some of the orderlies, but the doctor is the same and plunged into a discussion of the first volumes of Gibbon at the point where we had broken off before.

The malaria is rapidly declining, but unfortunately, I've got a bit of an extra and rather a painful one in an acute dose of shingles, a rotten kind of inflammation along my right side. It apparently has no known cause except general run-downedness; which is the more queer as I felt as fit as a fiddle till Sunday night. There's not the slightest danger attached to it, but I'm afraid it may take some time. Meanwhile the doctor is so pleased with it that he's gone to get the photographer! It's an ill wind, &c.

I'm afraid the whole business will be another three wasted weeks, during which Neville will have to cope single handed. The one clear fact is that when I do get back, it will be to only half of Talbot House—the men's half; and Neville taking the officers and the New House will give me a real chance of taking things easily.

XLVII.

Tubby's hopes were disappointed: he was not able to resume work at Talbot House until the Autumn—see note at the end of this letter. Of this long and serious gap there is no hint in *Tales*.

14 G.H.

Saturday, May 27th.

I'm quite fit again now so far as a normal temperature goes, but the silly old shingles thing has got to take its dilatory course, just as if neither wars nor Talbot House existed. It isn't painful now, as at first, but necessitates a dreary lying in bed. I hope they'll let me get up by

May 31st, and back by the Wednesday or so following. But I'm afraid I shan't have a look in for leave now until July at any rate.

Nothing in the world to record here, except a sunshiny day and a sweet sea breeze. I'm reading about three novels a day and shall probably take to writing one in a day or so as a counter irritant. To-morrow I hope to Receive after 7.15 Celebration, but other services will be beyond access.

I can't quite see Folkestone from the window, but that's only because I can't squint enough round the corner. Meanwhile I've kept a careful general eye on the Channel, and have reported all suspicious periscopes to the hospital authorities.

XLVIII.

FROM "THE GEN." TO TUBBY CLAYTON.

This and the two letters which follow it are surviving specimens of Pte. Pettifer's epistolary style. The first two were written to his "officer" during the latter's absence at the Base hospital; the third really belongs to a later period, outside the range of this series of letters; but all three reflect a relationship between "master and man" which was happily not rare in the British Expeditionary Force. The "bombing" of Poperinghe was a common and most unwelcome diversion. For the "photo of the old General in war paint" see *Tales* (54; 45): the portrait, issued as a separate plate with the *January Journal*, 1924, shows his Military Medal ribbon and is of later date. "Miss Clayton" was Tubby's sister, Isabel Clayton, who died last year (see *June Journal*, 1925, p. 162). The pencil original of this letter now hangs in All Hallows, Barking-by-the-Tower.

A. Pettifer, B.E.F.

1.6.'16.

DEAR MR. CLAYTON,—

In answer to your most welcome letter, Mr. Talbot, myself and all the staff are overjoyed to hear you are going on so nicely and they *all* send their love to you and are just dying to see you back again, but please allow me to tell you to be quite contented looking at the sea—that will do you a lot of good. The lads will hold the fort all right until you come back. Bombing as you speak about was not much. I have sent book, ties and pin, and also a photo of the old General *in war paint*. Sergt. Godley has returned from leave and enjoyed himself immensely and sends kind regards to you. The wife and children send their love to you, and they have heard from Miss Clayton, and when she comes back to London they are going to tea. But I think you and me will have our tea in P.O.P. . . .

I remain,

Yours sincerely,
GENERAL.

XLIX.

FROM "THE GEN." TO TUBBY CLAYTON.

"*Young Vok*" is Cecil Vokins (see Letters xxxix, xli, and xlii). For Sergt. Godley see Letters xxxv, xli, and xlviii. As for "*the old General*" himself, he had seen thirty years of Army life, off and on, and, after serving in France from November 1914, and in Flanders from May, 1915, was sent to Tubby as batman, and "later attached on grounds of debility to what is vulgarly known as an Area Employment Company" (*Tales* 54, 58; 44, 46); he was no longer fit for "*the trenches once more*." It will be seen that the song "*It's a long way to Tipperary*" was suited to all occasions; it was even known to be mistaken by our Allies for the British National Anthem. The original of this letter hangs on the stairs of Mark V, Southampton.

239, A. Pettifer, B.E.F.,

12.8.'16.

MY DEAR SIR,—

Don't be alarmed, the old General is still alive and kicking. I think it is almost time I answered your letter, don't you? Never mind you are a long way from me and cannot hit me—Ah! Ah! Well, myself and young Vok are very pleased you are coming back soon, and you

can bet we shall be pleased to see you again. Of course you know there has been a great change in both Houses since you left us. Sergt. Godley and his men have left us, also Mr. Talbot. Mr. Talbot told me he had a very hard struggle with my Colonel to keep me. Fancy you coming back and finding me in the trenches once more, popping at the boshes! Old Fritz has not sent us any more iron rations over for four weeks now; he generally pays us a visit about every six weeks, so I suppose we can soon look out for him. I feel sorry you are so lonely there. Never mind it's a long way to Tipperary—I mean a long lane that has no turning. Sergt. Godley and the lads all wished to be remembered to you before they went. Myself and young Vok send our love to you, and don't forget when you come back—to *bed early*. We'll see that you don't get knocked up again in a hurry. Will close now with love from the old

GENERAL.

L.

FROM "THE GEN." TO MRS. CLAYTON.

The following extract is taken from a letter written on April 3, 1918, to Tubby's mother, who had sent the writer an Easter message. It was found folded up in her New Testament. The original is now in All Hallows.

As for taking great care of your dear son, I think the boot fits the other foot—he takes great care of me. I simply send him to bed early—that is when he will go, which is not very often—and let him lie there until he wakes up. Then he gets up and comes out as if there wasn't a war on! . . . If there is any danger about I have always got my eye on him, and will stick to him to the last. . . .

INTERREGNUM: A NOTE.

The three months of Tubby's absence—June, July and August, 1916—were, in a real sense, the most critical in the history of the Old House. During the enemy's last "Big Push" in April–May, two years later, the House was liable (as indeed it had been all along) at any moment to destruction by bombing or shell-fire, or even—as one night false rumour caused it to be feared—to capture. But at least Tubby was on the spot, and the "Toc H spirit," however few the visitors who were able to enjoy it, reigned undiminished. But in the absence of Tubby in the Summer of 1916, some of the qualities which made the House unique among soldiers' resorts in the B.E.F. were felt also to have departed. Neville Talbot supervised the running of the House, but he had other duties—among them his special "pigeon," the Officers' Club. Moreover, before the end of July, he was under orders to leave Poperinghe. Several padres in turn were put into the House to run it, but it was not to be expected that they would feel for a frankly temporary job the same eager affection as Tubby, who had created it and planned everything on lines peculiarly his own. Some of the higher authorities fully appreciated what the House had begun in Tubby's hands to mean to hundreds of men, but there began to be a doubt as to whether, in any case, Tubby on recovery would be sent back to it. Add to this the fact that Poperinghe came in for such heavy shelling this summer that, as Neville reports (July 24), "T. H. is at present pretty well a desert, owing to absence of troops billeted here." Leonard Browne (*Tales* 113; 80) "visited the House in August and found it practically empty. Then Neville Talbot appeared one Sunday and announced that a most wonderful padre was soon to return to the House which he had helped to create." In September Tubby came back: the House, as originally conceived, was saved, and the foundations of Toc H, later to be, were firmly laid in the two years' work which followed.

No letters from Tubby himself during this confusing period are available, but a score of letters written to him, then and later, by Neville Talbot have been preserved: some of them deal in lively language with professional and domestic difficulties connected with the House, into which there is no need to enter now. Here are a few odd sentences from Neville's letters:—

"T.H., 8 June, '16: Don't tear that Tub Tub tree, under which you are doomed to try and rest, up by the roots. . . . Meanwhile I long to have you here, partly to chew with you all the little questions about Talbot House freed from those officers. . . . Write anything which ferments in your fertile head about de-incubussed Talbot House—what were you planning? N.B.—Where do you put the offertory money? It is, for my part, in an empty Panatella box. Have you plans for it? . . . Gamage writes to-night asking you to get a special permit for the billiard-table which, being 3-4 cwt., is refused by the M.F.O. (*Military Forwarding Officer*)."

"23 June, '16: Things are going, there is no doubt. . . . Plumer lunched (*i.e. at the Officers' Club*) to-day—a very proper and kindly man. Haig was hereabouts, but he didn't look in. Had better have a sign out—'a good pull-up for Generals and Red Tabs.' . . . Such a good Evensong to-night! Your working lives on, and we'll keep the home-fires burning." (He also refers to the arrival of the green and gold altar frontal, the gift of a Guards officer, now in the "Arras Chapel" of Mark VI, Birmingham. See *Tales* 70; 53).

"12 July, '16: Find they have been shelling this place horribly for the last two days: two officers killed in this (*i.e. the Officers' Club*) garden—but the two Houses survive. If they go on it will play the deuce with the Club—at the same time on coming back from Ypres to-day, where I had been R.A.-ing, and wondering whether I should find everything '*kaput*,' instead I found our luscious dinner going on, Savoywise, with a band in the garden. . . . The T.H. (*billiard*-) table hasn't turned up yet. . . . But the station and environs just now is 'no place for boys,' as my late Colonel would say. The elaborate hammock has arrived, but some pigs sat on it in fours and the bars of the upright have been horribly bent. A windfall has come at my request to Talbot House—some mysterious S. African garrison fund having 500 Fr. to dispose of—and I said 'Thank you, billiard table!' We shall be all right about finance, and can face Fritz and his souvenirs."

"*Divisional Rest Station, Wormhoudt*. July 15, '16: I, if you please, am in bed with 'flu—this will gratify you hugely. . . . Meanwhile for the last three or four days there has been a lot of shelling—a great many duds, but still enough live ones to matter. The two Houses are intact, but yesterday afternoon the order came that troops were to leave (the staff of House and Club were allowed to stay)—so where we are who knows?"

"*c.o. 4th Labour Bn., R.E.*, 24 July, '16: It is hard to write freely under the censorship. Everything is in flux. T.H. is at present pretty well a desert, owing to absence of troops billeted here. We must simply await developments—I think that, if quiet continues, things will fill up again." (Neville also refers to the probability of his Division being moved from Poperinghe soon).

26 July, '16: (Neville under orders to move.) "It is foul—the disruption of everything—but there is the House: the men are coming back to it bit by bit now, and I believe you ought to take it up again for another winter's campaign."

"30 July, '16—*anniversary of Gilbert's death*: . . . There is the House—it is full again of men. It calls for you. You ought to do it—it's what you are made for. If health disallows, then hand it to another for good. . . . I will only say that I *crave* for your affection to fill it."

"Aug. 2, '16: Ever hourly desired Tubby . . . I am just off up to Sanctuary Wood to see if I can find any traces of Gilbert's grave before I go. It will take a little getting at—but I've all a night and the willing help of Canadian staff people. The situation was fought over

and is now, I think, just behind our line." (When Gilbert Talbot was killed at Hooge in 1915, Neville had crawled out at night, under fire, to find his body. A week later, with three Yorkshire lads who volunteered to carry a stretcher, he made a dash over the parapet and brought it in for burial—see Canon Scott Holland's article *So as by fire* in the JOURNAL, November, 1924, p. 290).

"7 Aug., '16: I am handing over all right. . . . The new Corps (*II Corps*) has played up like anything about getting a staff. . . . I'm afraid the house is again pretty empty, but your substitutes seem to have no idea of friendly tea-parties. We have had no more shells."

"H.Qrs. XIV Corps, 19 Aug., '16: I am in a new hemisphere, have left our Metropolis far behind and am now behind this, in every use of the term, bloody battle. . . . A foul devil's throb of a strafe on to-night." (XIV Corps was now in action in the Somme Battle).

The decision that Tubby was not to return to Talbot House seemed about to be taken, irrevocably. Neville—"the fire hot within him"—appealed once again to the powers that be. "7 Sept., '16, H.Qrs. XIV Corps: . . . So much chaplain's work out here is with men in herds in billets, and under the handicap that they have often no place where men can come and see them, and that their work is largely at arm's length. . . . For the hordes of homeless lads crowded in billets it's a homey place with a friend at home to them, and a quiet and beautiful place to worship in, that is wanted. . . . It is qualitative, intensive, personal work that is needed." On September 11 he repeats that he has written once again to press for "one man at T.H. with his main business to rescue it from being merely a coffee-bar with papers and draughts. . . . Coffee-barismus is (how pathetic that it should be called so!) not 'great and good work'."

(? September, 1916) "I am so very thankful that somehow or other you are back at the Old House. Forgetting the things that are behind, stretch forward, etc. . . . At the early 'coping' days of the Officers' Club did we bag too much from T.H. ? ; if so, in its adult prosperity go and bag it back."

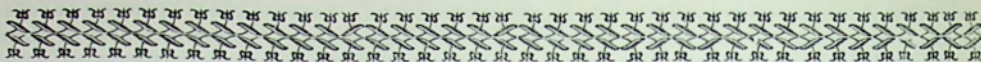
"28 Sept., '16: My thoughts fly to you at an emergency—have just been told on the telephone that I have to go from XIV Corps to be A.C.G. to Reserve (*afterwards Fifth*) Army. Isn't it awful! Imagine my office! Good-bye to the front! By jingo, but for T.H. and the souls of men, you ought to come and sun the situation with laughter and other spiritual commodities. . . . P.S.—I wear a tremendous hat."

"Oct. 20, '16, H.Qrs. Reserve Army: Just arrived here—feel a v. new boy. . . . I saw Dawkins go through my Dressing Station, not I thought mortally hit—broken thigh—but very exhausted. Go forth, Christian soul! Is Gardner killed *too*? O dear! . . . So glad about Talbot H. religious prosperity: I *must* somehow get to Pop. . . . Be good about bed. Love to the General." (Lieut. Guy Dawkins, 2nd Scots Guards, was "one of the best friends" of Talbot House while his Division was there—see *Tales* 48; 41. For Godfrey Gardner see Letter xli).

"H.Q., R. Army, 25 Oct., '16: A month from now I have again to be at S. Omer. . . . and if you are there then we *will* come on to Pop. for a night—say of Nov. 25th, or 26th. . . . Dear Tubby, all our saints are with Christ, which is far better—dear Street of the Sherwoods the last I have heard of. . . . It is good to hear of your progress. . . . Mind, mind, mind and keep well!" (Major Edmund Street was killed on October 15—see Note to Letter xvii).

* * * * *

And here is a last word—from a letter, written to Tubby on December 29, 1916, from H.Q., 8th Division, by Neville's brother, Edward Talbot (now head of the Community of the Resurrection, Mirfield): "I want to say how much I loved being with you at Pop. and breathing the air of Talbot House—the only place on the Front which has kinship with Bethlehem."



The Prince's Motto



de Bronze, secured him a bedroom next to mine, and sat down to face him across the supper table.

Grim was too full of his cross-Channel adventure, (2) as captain of a crew of one, to heed any of his surroundings, but, as I listened to his talk, my eye fell upon the waiter, a slightly grizzled, broken sort of a man, with a sardonic cast of countenance, who hovered about the room, flapping the backs of chairs with his napkin in the intervals of serving us. I caught him watching us a little closely, and his forlorn figure was somehow familiar to me. As he set down the coffee at the end of the meal I noticed that he had lost the first two fingers of his right hand—and then I remembered. Gaston Roux's little restaurant at Abbeville . . . an August night in 1917 . . . four of us passing through on leave, supping merrily, had christened this same waiter "Doigtless" because he had lost two fingers. And somehow the mongrel nickname had fitted his seedy aspect. . . . He had left the room now—never mind, I would ask him about it in the morning.

"Come along," said Jim, "let's see if the boat's all snug for the night." And with that we walked out on the *digue* which borders the river. The boat was snug enough. There she lay asleep at the edge of the two miles of shallow water which is the estuary of the Somme at high tide. The afterglow of the vanished sun had turned this expanse into a crucible of dull molten metal over which the little craft seemed to hover suspended, and above her, for a mast-head light, a brilliant planet hung in the sky. We were both much moved by this dream-picture and sat down facing it to light our pipes. Grim was in the vein to talk and I to listen, and I give you the tale he told, as nearly as possible in his actual words:—

* Figures in brackets here and there, will be found to refer to notes at the end, which no one is bound to read.

What Grim Told

"I'VE been in St. Valery once before, passing through. It sticks in my mind because of a queer thing that happened to me that same day. It has sometimes bothered me, but I've never told a soul about it before. However, here goes!

It was back in the summer of '16. As you know I served with the R.A.M.C. At that time I was an orderly in a C.C.S. at Remy Siding, just outside Poperinghe, but when the Somme battle got into its stride there was a rush of wounded further South which the base hospitals had hard work to cope with, and I was ordered off, like others, at a moment's notice to join the hospital at Le Treport. By a chance our colonel was going down in the same direction and offered me a lift in his car—he was always very decent like that.

It was an unlucky journey. Somewhere beyond Aire we took a rotten short cut and broke a back axle. The colonel told me to get along. So I foot-slogged it as far as Fruges, where I hopped a lorry going South. It fetched up in Hesdin towards evening and parked for the night, and while I was wondering what to do next, bless me if I didn't bump into Moggs, my stockbroker at home—wearing his first stripe, same as I was, at the time! He fixed me up with grub and a nap at his billet, and before daylight I shoved off on a push-bike—Army pattern, part-worn, scrounged—up the hill, in a thick, cold mist. I wasn't built right for that sort of exercise, even in those days, and it was sour work.

It was still darkish and bitter cold on the high ground, but as I rode the grey mist grew pink, and I knew the sun was coming up behind me. On the spur of a hill that goes down into a big forest I hopped off—very saddle sore. The old bike had been rattling abominably, and, when I stopped, the utter stillness of the morning made me hold my breath. But after a moment or two I found the silence wasn't complete. Up in the field to my left there was a low sound, rising and falling, of men's voices, and sometimes a clink of iron, muffled in the mist. I dropped my bike in the ditch and began to walk across, feeling that I could do with a bit of company. As I strode up the slope the low-lying vapour thinned and a dark cliff loomed up in front of me: it was the edge of an oak spinney that crowned the ridge of a hill. All out in front of the trees a great number of men were sitting on the ground. One or two stood up, stamping in the dew and blowing on their fingers, and in the half-light I could see fairly well the uniforms they wore. You remember how our men used to look in the Salient in winter kit—I mean the shaggy goat-skins with their "tin hats" on top—just as if they had walked out of some old-fashioned century, I used to think. Well, these chaps looked like that—only more so. One of them, nearest to me, stood a little apart, leaning against an outstanding tree. He was tuning away softly to himself on a wooden pipe, a home-made bit of a thing but mellow as a blackbird.

'Cold work,' I said to him, by way of an opening. He put down his flute.

'Main cold I be,' he replied, 'and fair clemmed for waiting victuals.'

'Shake!' said I, holding out my hand, 'we both come from the West Country.'

He took my hand with a grin. 'Us never shakes, though, down along—afore nobody whatsomever. We'm proud men on the Moor.'

'Where's that?' I asked.

'Down to Taveystock, where my father's holding do lie.'

'But that's where *my* father was born!' I cried—and at that he laughed aloud for pleasure.

I asked him what all his crowd was doing out there, sitting so watchful on the cold field, and he told me that they had been posted like that most of the night and expected the enemy to attack as soon as the sun was up. I was very taken aback, as you may suppose—seeing that these queer troops were miles and miles from the line and facing the wrong way, and I asked him what enemy. He seemed very puzzled in return, by my question, and said 'the

Frenchies of course.' So we were utterly at cross purposes and changed the conversation. He told me he had been campaigning about in France and Flanders for ever so long, that rations had been bad and loot scarce and pay uncertain and leave *nil*—all the old soldier's grievances rolled into one. (3) But this 'fed-up' mood couldn't last long—he was too good a fellow for that. He didn't pull a photograph of his family out of his wallet in the universal manner, but he gave me a stunning word picture of them all at home. 'Maybe I'll be down along, come Michaelmas,' he said eagerly, 'and turn over thicky great field of ourn with father. When the white fowl do come up from sea to the back of our plough, you do know a cruel winter be drawing on 'ee.'

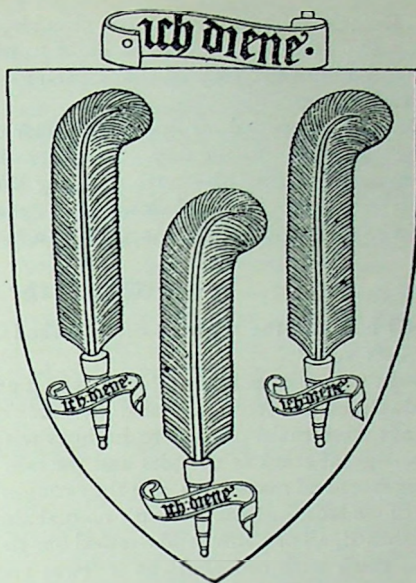
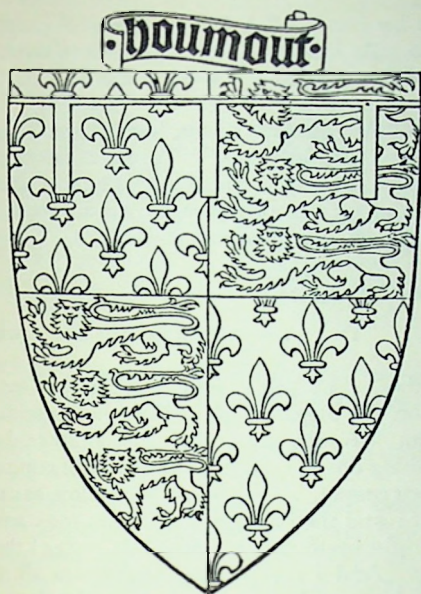
The sun was up, almost with a burst over the ground mist, and the patient troops stirred with a new animation as they sat. And when the ranks moved—ever so slightly—a million diamonds of dew glistened on their coats and a chatter of steel ran through the long line. Suddenly they were alert and silent at the galloping of a heavy horse in the mist. The hoofs beat nearer and slowed into a walk—and then horse and rider appeared, not a hundred yards away. The big black horse was breast high in the sinking mist, so that the man on his back seemed to be swimming him through a fairy ford; but the man's head was in the rosy sunlight of the morning—a head covered with flashing steel. He raised his arm for a moment and saluted us with a loud "Ho! Ho!" and then he wheeled short and vanished as he had come. (4) At the first sight of him the seated men had stooped forward to pick up their arms from the grass, and some sprang to their feet. My Tavistock friend reached for his weapon which stood against the tree at his back. 'If you don't shoot brave and quick with 'un, master,' he said to me, 'it isn't no manner of use you biding here. Thicky horse-sodger's a scout, and they'm all coming on soon, I'll be bound.' I looked to see what it was he held in his hand. It was a long bow! Somehow that put the wind right up me! I turned and ran like a rabbit, hitched my bike out of the hedge, and pedalled like mad down the hill. The village I came to, and the sight of phlegmatic people sweeping their front steps, calmed me wonderfully. I turned in at a little old pub (the *Golden Cannon*, I remember) drank a cognac and ordered an omelette for two—for hunger and fatigue cried out in me. After an hour's rest I slogged forward in the gathering heat of the morning, crossed the Somme bridge to St. Valery, and at last—better late than never, whatever the sergeant-major may have said about it—I reported for duty at the hospital at Treport."

Grim's talk, an unusually long spell for him, came to an end, and he sat puffing his pipe in the darkness until it glowed red. Then he added, "Middle-aged gents shouldn't ride bicycles at night. Cold and hunger and the early hours play old tricks when you aren't in training. I don't know why I've made such a song to you about a dream. The only thing is that it *wasn't* a dream: I swear I was awake the whole time. Come along, let's turn in."



THE following afternoon, Saturday the twenty-sixth (I think the date counts), we hired a little car in the town and went for a run. Before we left I enquired in the kitchen for "Doigtless," and madame seemed a bit put out, for he had only been taken on as a waiter the day before, she told me, and had clean disappeared during the night. I commiserated with her on the faithlessness of modern domestics (not that there was anything modern about "Doigtless" that I could see), and then we started. We had no plan of campaign: Grim took the wheel and began to drive—that was all.

It was a sultry afternoon, with thunder in the air. We crossed the railway line at Noyelles and turned into narrow lanes, among apple orchards and little farms, and before long plunged



into a big forest. Here, for several miles, it was more than ever oppressive, almost uncanny between the silent walls of green on which not a leaf stirred. When we issued upon the open road again, the horizon lay under an immense blue-black cloud, and as we turned into a wide village street the first big drops of rain came down. The car drew up at an old stone house with a gilded toy field-piece hung as a sign over the door, and we hurried into shelter. " Bless me ! " exclaimed Grim, after a glance round, " if this ain't the pub I was telling you about last night—the *Golden Cannon* of my dream." (5) The features of this little public room are repeated a thousand times in French villages—the shining brasses above the stove, the absurd panorama of the battle of Gravelotte, the poster about " public drunkenness," the throne guarded by a row of coloured bottles, where Madame sits in the evenings. In the centre stood a round table at which we took seats to await coffee, and in the corner a smaller marble-topped one on an iron stalk. *I am perfectly clear that, as we entered, we were the whole company present.*

* * * * *

There was a dazzling flash of lightning, a stunning peal of thunder overhead, and the rain came roaring and dancing down the street. Blinded for a moment, I turned my head by instinct away from the open door, and when I could see clearly again I was facing the marble-topped table in the corner. And there sat a man—a little grizzled man, with a sardonic smile on his face. The right hand which rested on the marble and encircled a tiny glass of cognac, was minus the first and second fingers. The man was " Doigtless."

Undoubtedly the man was our ex-waiter. He sat quite still, and looked fixedly at the back of Grim's head. " By Jove ! " said Grim, who had also ducked at the thunder ; and then, becoming aware (as a man will) that someone's eyes were upon him from behind, he turned sharply. " By Jove ! " he said again—this time to " Doigtless." With that he rose, at the same time taking me by the arm, and stepped eagerly across the room. " Shake ! " he said,

and "Doigtless," with an audible chuckle, gave his hand. "A friend of mine," continued Grim, and "Doigtless" gave his hand to me also. As long as I live I shan't lose the feel of that hand, minus two fingers, that closed for an instant on mine. "Why, it was back in '16!" exclaimed Grim.

"Doigtless" opened his lips for the first time. "August twenty-six, 'twas, sure enough—nine years ago—to the day. But seemth to I 'tis untold years." To my amazement he had answered in English—with a strong West Country accent, which our common spelling cannot reproduce. There followed the strangest and yet one of the most real quarters of an hour in my experience. I played but a listener's part and shall call it—

What the Soldier Said

"**A**ND how did the show go off?" asked Grim. "You were just going into action when I left you."

"Didn't you never hear tell? 'Twas a grand day! Us had to bide, same as you seed us, from daylight till afternoon—and then they came on, the biggest army as ever was, I reckon. (6) Our lads were main pleased to be busy with them. To the start 'twas just another day as this be—great crack of thunder and the rain splashing down. And then the sun blazing right in their faces and mazed 'em, so's they couldn't shoot proper. They let off one volley, as caught a few of we lads, but there wasn't no real aim to it: and then me and my maties took a smart step forward, all of a row, and drew our strings right up to the ear and let fly. Zzt! the sky was so thick with our shots as if 'twas snowing. And I reckon that shook 'em all ways. Their front men falled all abroad, and their own horse-sodgers runned clean into 'em from behind."

"So it was a walk over," said Grim.

"Not that, particular, it wasn't. Some of they Germans, as fights along of the Frenchies, broke right through into our battalion—the Prince of Wales's that was, you'll understand (7)—and us was a brave while chasing 'em back."

"And did you see the Prince himself?"

"Iss fay!" chuckled the soldier, "I seed him. His prettiest fight, and very nigh his last, though. Just when the enemy fell on us thick and sudden, I were all mixed in between two proper great gentlemen—they all in iron and horsed, and me on my feet with nought but a bow, as I couldn't draw for the press, and a little short knife to my belt. (8) Being so high on their horses and so close, I couldn't see who 'twas—besides, we was all three main busy with our eyes and hands thereabouts. The gentleman on my right hand toppled sudden all sideways, with a sword-stroke to his helm—crang! it must have split him to the teeth—and falled clean across my front. He never loosed the great silk flag out of his hand, but his sword fell between my feet, and I bent quick to catch it up. In the same minute a man, lying to the ground wounded, stabbed up into the belly of the horse upon my left. Up rears the horse and falls, heaving and kicking out; down slides the gentleman, all heavy in his iron gear—and as he slid, so I did see the lions of England and the gold lilies on his coat. Quick's a flash, far quicker than I be telling 'ee, I has the silk flag out of the first gentlemen's hand and over the second gentleman lying on the ground—so's nobody should see the lions and lilies. And with that I plants my two feet wide on the flag and takes two hands to the sword, whirling 'un like any windmill. (9) 'Twasn't no sword-play—that's for gentlemen born, and it didn't last long. For a Frenchy knight druv his blade down mine, and the two fingers that was over the guard (for you see there's no proper place for ten fingers on a single-hilted sword)—well, I never saw *they* again! The sword slipped away, and there I was, with not so much as a quarter staff between me and quick death. But the gentleman had come to his feet from under

the silk flag, and in he dashes, with a loud shout of "*Houmout!*" and laying about him like one mad, till the Frenchies gave back and then turned and ran. And our battalion ran too, yelling and striking, and me yelling among them—with no weapon but my bow which I'd

got up again (it's second nature to a bowman) and waving a long stripe of silk torn from the flag and wropt round my broken hand! It was bloody slaughter after that, I tell 'ee, and 'twas the turn of the day. But when I set hands to my bow I couldn't draw 'un beyond the elbow—my hand was that clidgy with blood. But I wouldn't go in with my little short knife—same as the Cornish lads did that day, that fights according to no rules, clan-

jambering in among the Frenchy great gentlemen and slitting 'em like 'twas pigs." (10)

"So you got a Blighty," interposed Grim, "you might have got killed and that would have been worse."

"Not hardly worse for a bowman," rejoined the soldier, "for I've never shot since."

"And after that?"

"And after that, come dusk, I were standing aside on the field, and up comes our Prince, with the lions and lilies on his coat, scanning, real sad-like, over the dead as lay in swathes like mowing-time. (11) "Hey, fellow!" he says to me, "and what hast 'a there?"—and with that he lays hold of the silken stripe a-dangling from my broken hand. "Why, 'tis the great banner of Wales!" he says—and "Bowman," says he, "maybe you saved my life with that silk"—and "Certain sure, my Lord," says I "you saved mine."

"'Tis my own banner of Wales," says he "but I'll buy 'un from 'ee"—and with that he holds me out a gold Royal-piece.

"So it please your Highness, I'd as lief keep it," says I, bold-like.

"*Houmout!* man," says he, laughing, "and the gold piece too"—and with that he lays a hand on my shoulder a moment and walks away on.

"And I kept it always and wouldn't part—not to the holy Pope himself," added the soldier. And with that he drew a little bunch of stained and threadbare green silk from his pocket, and, opening it on the palm of his hand, displayed a gold coin of curious design.

"But what's *Houmout?*" asked Grim. (12)

"Why the motto of our Prince, to be sure. '*Hearts high!*' is the meaning to it; and high-hearted, sure enough, was our Prince all that day."

"But surely *Ich Dien* is the Prince's motto, man?" said Grim.

"And so 'tis—when he do wear the feathers. But that's not to his battle helmet: then 'tis '*Houmout*' and the lion crowned. Always when there's steel and stern work his word was '*Hearts high!*' and a lion's bravery—and so we lads did follow 'un. But in the quiet times and the bright feasts and the work at home he'd carry the silk robe and the three plumes to his bonnet and the word was '*I serve.*' But most times, it seemed to I, he carried both mottoes in his mind."

"But after all," said Grim, getting on to a new tack, "you got home for Michaelmas and helped your father plough the great field?"

"Fancy you minding that!" exclaimed the soldier, highly delighted. "And the white fow! up from the sea did follow our furrow, and so 'twas the cruellest winter for mortal years,

*See you home!
John Doe!*

same as I told 'ee. The sheep died 'pon top the Moor, and I were pretty nigh dead myself trying for to dig 'em out of the snow."

"But when the spring came you settled down on the farm—and I hope you married that girl you told me about?"

The soldier shook his head slowly and there was a new hardness in his voice when he spoke again—"Nought whatsoever didn't come right, nor never will now. Us had two cruel hard seasons treading on each other's heels. And then the Black Plague started terrible bad up



to Bristol, and seemed to run all over us like a sea-wave. (13) Father took first and died, and then mother were gone. Up to the castle the old lord—as proper a man as ever you seed, and I fought for 'un overseas and worked for 'un down along from a boy—he was took, and parson was took thicky same day, so as he couldn't bury 'un. In one house there was seven stark dead of a morning, and five in another, all lying of a heap together. One sunrise that was to have been our wedding day, my little maid come running to I, with the sweat cold on her face and the blistering hand of death upon her cheek, and I carried her home and held her—crookied down in my arms like as if 'twas a child—till the evening come: and then she were gone too. That same night I tried main hard to die myself, but 'twasn't no manner of use. And often again I tried—and at last I fetched out along, and shan't never go back no more."

Grim was touched to the heart, as I could see, but quite at a loss to say a word.

"Times there be," continued the soldier more calmly, "when I do play the old tunes, so as to bring the good days to mind. 'Tisn't the flute though, because I can't finger 'un proper now." And with that he drew a dented mouth-organ from his pocket, and ran his lips in a strange sweet scale down the keys. I think it heartened him.

"Come the twenty-six of August, year after year, I do stand on the old place where we fought, same's you saw us. Last night I set foot from St. Valery, with no man to see, and, come midnight, I waded the river at the ford—"

"But there's a bridge at St. Valery," interrupted Grim.

"Waded the river," continued the soldier with a rising voice, "at the ford—Blanquetache where Robin showed us across on the great morning. (14) And dripping with the cold river me and my maties were that day: dripping with the river again I marched the

old roads in the bright moonshine. Come peep of day, I was standing—same as you saw us—by the trees on the hill, watching out. And some of my maties do lie up yonder in the ground, waiting for the Trumpet to sound for their rising. But the only Frenchies as the sunshine brought this morning was the Frenchy children, peeping through the bosky, and creeping through the grasses to I, and setting, shy and smiling, in a ring to my feet. And I did

play 'em tunes about the good times me and my maties looked for to find. But childer be childer, all places over, and 'tis all the same whose they be : they knows nought of the heart sick for the good times—'tis just tunes to they."

The soldier rose suddenly to his feet and looked with a piercing intensity into Grim's eyes and into mine. His face had lost all of its weariness and his voice was passionately loud as he went on speaking—"But the good days as us lads looked for to find—did they never come true? When me and my maties lay rough in the cold, and marched hungry and fought bitter—they was good days. When our young Prince stuck his banner in the bush at nights, and stood along of we by the camp fire, with the chatter and the songs, them was good days—we all belonged into one *family* in a manner of speaking, then. And the great lords as rode horseback—they travelled the road same as we, and they fought no braver and no worse, and death took 'em alongside us plain bowmen. 'Twas our 'High Hearts' in them days, I reckon, as made 'em beautiful and grand. And where have the 'High Hearts' agone to after the wars? There's cruel winter still and men laying hungry and cold, and there's the Black Plague, and there's low black hearts despising the poor, and women and children weeping the world over, and men marching for the new wars. My maties—and *your* maties, masters—they died for the good days that was promised us. And will the good days never come?"..

He paused, looking from one to the other of us, as if we should answer his question. A new gentleness and joy came to his face and age seemed to drop away from his lean figure : it was a West Country farmer's lad that spoke to us now. "I've a-loved a fair fight as well as any man on Dartmoor—but there won't never need to be more wars if ye'll only hold fast together. And then the good days'll come, better nor *our* good days, and a proper sight longer. Dear sakes ! they'd have come hundreds and hundreds of years agone, if all the young lads had only held fast. Think of all the dear lads that's gone, and all the young lads that's to come afore England is growed up and finished proper ! Why don't 'ee all hold fast together ?" He threw up his maimed hand with an indescribable gesture—" *Houmout !* " he cried.

Grim, roused from his self-possession, took a step forward. "Man alive ! " he began—

* * * * *

|| DON'T know what came over me at this point—but suddenly the position seemed unbearable.

Perhaps it was Grim's "Man alive ! " *Was* this man alive ? Was he acting a part—or merely mad ? Was he a fiction of my own mind ? Was he the ghost of all the men who have fought for a promised country and have not entered in ? I caught Grim's arm and pulled him back. "Come away," I whispered, "the rain's stopped and the car's outside. Come away now, old man." I put a note on the table for our coffee, and hustled Grim through the open door and into the car. Neither of us looked behind, but as we turned the corner of the street I am sure I heard a mouth-organ playing a wild, sweet tune.

"Phew ! " said Grim, "the thunder's made me go all funny in the head." As for me I sat still, stupidly regarding my right palm, as if I expected to see there an indelible impress of the bowman of Crecy's maimed hand.

I was the first to break the long silence between us which followed—"HEARTS HIGH ! is a good password for Toc H."

"And the countersign must be I SERVE," said Grim. "'With gallant and high-hearted happiness'—how does it run ?—'we work for Thy Kingdom in the wills of men.'"

B. B.

* * * * *

(NOTE : If anyone doubts the word of Grim and myself, let him read the notes that follow—and remain sceptical, if he dare !)

the ostrich feather crest of the gallant blind King of Bohemia on the field of Crecy and gave it to his son is, alas! demolished by the heralds, for King John's crest was certainly two outspread *vulture's* wings, sown with gold linden leaves. Camden, in Queen Elizabeth's reign, is the first historian to mention the Feathers, and he says "the tradition is" that the Prince won them in 1356 at Poitiers. The first documentary evidence of their royal use in England is an inventory of plate of about 1370, in which "a large dish for alms, silver gilt," bears "a black escutcheon with ostrich feathers"; but it belonged to the Queen. The most detailed evidence comes from the Black Prince's will, dated June 7, 1376. He gives minute instructions about his tomb and funeral procession. The tomb is to bear twelve shields, each a foot high, round it (see picture on p. 319). On six is to be "our entire arms" (*i.e.*, the leopards of England and *fleur de lys* of France), and on six the ostrich feathers, and on *all* of them the motto "*Houmout*." This last point of the will was disregarded, for the six shields with ostrich feathers actually bear the motto "*Ich Dien*," not only at the top but on a scroll round each feather. He also directs that two men, fully armed, with two horses, should walk in front of his corpse through the streets of Canterbury to the Cathedral. Man and horse were to bear his arms and crests, *i.e.*, "the one for *War*, with our entire arms quarterly; and the other for *Peace*, with our badge of ostrich feathers": moreover, "the one who shall be armed for War shall have an armed man carrying after him a black pennon with ostrich feathers." He also bequeaths to Canterbury Cathedral, to Wallingford Castle, and to his son (afterwards Richard II) various state robes and hangings, embroidered with gold roses and swans with women's heads and ostrich feathers. That the Black Prince actually used the motto *Ich Dien* is proved by an extraordinarily interesting piece of evidence—his only known signature to a document—a warrant of 1370 granting 50 marks a year to certain gentlemen. He writes his initials (but less legibly than our own Patron) and adds both his mottoes "*houmout*" and "*Ich dene*," enclosed in a rough circle, as though he had mislaid his royal seal and was trying to produce one on the spur of the moment! (see reproduction on p. 321). So, to sum up, the ostrich feathers were a *badge* and never the Black Prince's *crest*—*i.e.*, worn on his helmet; the motto *Ich Dien*—I serve—belonged to the feathers, but was not his official royal motto. As for the later history of all this, my readers wouldn't thank me for pursuing the subject here.

(13) The Black Death followed hard on King Edward's triumphant return from the French wars, and struck deep into the luxurious English life of 1348. It was the worst visitation of pestilence in all history, and in England certainly one half—some say two-thirds—of the total population died. The bowman couldn't bear to tell us of all the horrors he had seen, but you can get a vivid picture of it by reading about "the Black Death in East Anglia" in that charming book, *The coming of the Friars*, by Augustus Jessop.

(14) The bowman, very naturally, made a French name into an English one in telling the story to us. The guide's name was Gobin Agache, and he came from the village of Mons-Boubert, near St. Valery, to gain the reward Edward had offered for a safe passage over the Somme. The ford of Blanquetache was midway between St. Valery and Abbeville, near the village of Port. It was here that the waters parted, so tradition says, when they carried the body of Saint Valery over in 981 for burial. Nowadays, you can walk across it easily on a causeway through the reedy marshes; but when the English army arrived, a little before 5 a.m., they were held up for several hours by the tide. This gave a Norman commander, Godemard de Fay, time to march a French force of 12,000 men up to the opposite bank, and when the English did at last plunge into the river, they had to fight desperately for a landing. They knew it was "now or never," and finally routed the French with great slaughter.

THE ILLUSTRATIONS.

p. 316. The initial L was used by the French Printer, Antoine Verard in a quaintly illustrated book, *La Mer des Histoires*, printed for P. le Rouge in Paris in 1487.

The original, printed from a woodcut by an unknown hand is surely the biggest letter ever used in a printed book—for it measures about 8 inches high. At the bottom stands St. George in the more elaborate armour of the fifteenth century (compare picture on p. 322), above him the lady he rescued from the dragon, and round about a wonderful zoological collection.

p. 319. The shields of arms from the Black Prince's tomb in Canterbury Cathedral (see note 12 above). On the left the "entire arms" of England with the motto *Houmout*; on the right the feathers with *Ich Dien* four times repeated.

p. 321 (top). The gold *Pavillon* or *Royal d'Or* which the Prince gave the bowman, here reproduced actual size. On the "obverse" the Black Prince is seen, sword in hand, wearing an ermine-lined mantle over his robes, and with each foot on a lion *couchant*. He appears to stand under a Gothic canopy, but is probably intended to be seated on an elaborate throne. On each side of him are two ostrich feathers, crossed by a scroll on which (were it visible) *Ich dien* would be inscribed. The reverse has a geometrical design in which leaves and "acorns," lions and "lilies" play a part.

p. 321 (bottom): The sign and mottoes in the handwriting of the Black Prince referred to in Note 12 above. The sign seems to be *S. de P.* (? *sigillum* (seal) or *signature de Prince*).

p. 322. The bronze effigy of the Black Prince from his splendid tomb in Canterbury Cathedral. It shows him in the coat with "lions" of England (properly leopards) and "lilies" of France, with his head pillowed on his battle helmet with the proper crest—a lion (*not* feathers)—and his feet resting on a lion-cub.



A NEW PILGRIMS PROGRESS— VII.

OPPORTUNITY is taken to present readers of the JOURNAL with the really "speaking likeness" of our African pilgrim which forms the frontispiece of this number. This excellent photograph was taken by the Johannesburg *Star* (see June JOURNAL, p. 218). A further instalment of the great story follows herewith, and the list of the first Groups to be registered in the Transvaal and Cape Province will be found on p. 331 of the present number.

Umkomaas, Natal.

July, 4, 1926.

My dear "Journalists,"

I think my last letter was written just as we were leaving the Transvaal, and diving into the Eastern Province of the Cape. This last month has been as different in character from the previous five weeks as possible, but it has been the same story of many old friends of my own, and many new friends of Toc H, both equally joyful finds. Apart from the Meetings, which have necessarily been fewer in number than on the crowded "Reef," I think the chief memory is of long motor drives through some of the most gorgeous country, but on less gorgeous roads! Motors have opened up districts out here which in the old days were all but inaccessible, and for the first four days of this week we have been on our way from East London (maps, please!) to this Natal holiday coast through the great native territory called Pondoland. The road seemed always to be running along the highest ridges, and views of 80-100 miles on both sides were the rule rather than the exception; with valleys up to 2,000 feet deep opening up constantly; hills dotted with native kraals; and over all the 200 odd miles of view the unbroken sunshine! One day of rain only in the last month, which *of course* we had marked down for one of the longest drives and on the greasiest of roads. It is also not without its humour to watch one of the back wheels of your car making a career of its own over the veld, joyful and lighthearted, until, after leaping a variety of bushes and scrub, it settles down peacefully 50 yards away: lucky that it was not on a precipice, or we might never have seen it again. But now to business—

My first meeting was at a Railway Camp called *Cookhouse*, on June 6, and not inappropriately so-named when the hot weather comes! It was an old happy meeting-ground of my own Railway Mission days. We landed there at 1 a.m. on a Sunday morning, and it was a joy to Celebrate again in the little Church of St. Paul the Traveller, which was built in my time. Our meeting was fixed for noon at the church. To my surprise some thirty men rolled up, including several old friends, so we shifted the meeting to the churchyard and had a great yarn, at the risk of many Sunday dinners, till close on two! I told them that I had always felt that Toc H had a special contribution to make in the smaller places, and asked them to try out the idea to the full, by way of possibly giving a lead to such places in the whole of S. Africa. A letter to-day from Bobs Weddall, the Secretary, looks as if this might come gloriously true. "Up to the present," he writes, "we have enrolled 44 (probationer) members of whom I am pleased to say the majority are Dutch. Our meetings at present are being held in the Gent's Waiting room on the Station, on Saturday evenings. We feel that the movement is getting a real hold here and the enthusiasm is growing. . . . We had a visitor from some Natal Branch (?) at our second meeting"—but it is a mystery to me how he can have discovered them so soon. Their first job is the cleaning up of the graveyard. Good luck to dear old Cookhouse, say I! That will be a grand meeting place for Toc H travellers as the place is a junction for three lines.

A short drive brought one to *Somerset East* for a Sunday evening meeting in the Dutch Reformed Church Hall. I think that a portion of the audience had expected a Missionary meeting, but, despite that fact, we found a good nucleus of men willing to form a Group in that beautiful little township lying at the foot of the hills.

Grahamstown, by train, was our next port of call, and as my original home in S. Africa was there, it was a joy to get a day or two of comparative peace, after the rush in the Transvaal, as the guests of the Bishop and Mrs. Phelps. Not that there were not meetings galore, for Grahamstown is a great educational centre, but the whole atmosphere is a restful one. I spoke to three great Schools, St. Andrew's College (the great Church Public School), Kingswood (Wesleyan), and the Victoria High School; to the Training College (the L.W.H. assisting) which is run by the Community of the Resurrection—for ever connected with the memory of its founder, Mother Cecile, and from which the girls go out as teachers all over S. Africa; and not least of all, to a grand crowd of Rhodes University Students, men and women, in the hour between lunch and games. The town meeting on the last evening was a first-rate one. A strong group was not only formed, but has passed through its provisional stage almost at once, as they obviously had the good men and true ready to act as Secretary, Jobmaster and Padre. A delightful memory was being invited back to the University after this meeting to find a room full of fellows waiting to thresh out Toc H and many other matters with the help of endless cups of cocoa, and not a few dressing gowns!

And so on to a real five days' break at a very happy holiday place of old days—Port Alfred (*alias* the Kowie) and some of the best golf in S. Africa. June 17 saw us off again (the day of greasy roads) to the little town of *Alice*, where dear old Harry Bennett (the original East London Secretary) had arranged a meeting. The rain prevented big numbers but there was nothing amiss with the keenness of those present, and their Group is getting down to it finely.

An hour or two's railway run brought us at long last, the next day, to *St. Matthew's College*, and to a memorable week-end with Bert Oldfield and his merry men, as the guests of Mr. and Mrs. Jobmaster Dale. Picture to yourselves a wide valley with the sunbathed hills, if not mountains, round it—some twenty miles from the nearest railway (N.B. don't try to do a record run in the post car with its Toc H driver, the latest recruit, on the day after heavy rain!); the homes of the Mission Staff and buildings of the native training College dotted about among the trees, and the big Mission Church in the centre of it all, alongside the football ground; four miles down the valley the little township of *Keiskama Hoek* itself, for ever famous in Toc H annals. We had a meeting of the Branch the first evening, when the Lamp was lit for the first time and a new member was initiated, the first German member of the Branch, and indeed in S. Africa (there is a strong German Colony in these parts dating back to the days of the Crimean war). On the Sunday morning I celebrated at the Church for a huge congregation, mainly of the College boys and girls, and the Lamp, which I had brought so far, was taken from the Altar and deposited in the window niche alongside, its permanent home.* For the rest, I have great memories of a wonderful picnic with "Jobs" and his wife and Oldfield up in the forest; of the most perfect welcomes to us both from that whole "happy valley"; of a fine meeting in the Township to extend the membership in that direction; and last, but far from least, of a talk to the college "boys" and of their singing of some of their native songs unaccompanied. One has memories of some of the grandest Russian part-singing, and of the best of old Folk Songs, but I can say definitely that nothing ever came quite up to what the native boys sang that night at St. Matthews, both in the richness of the voices and the beauty of the music; and this without any rehearsal and in spite of the fact that they sang just as they were sitting and without any sorting out of the voices.†

Another drive brought us to *King William's Town* where Padre Stokes had booked up an A.1 meeting and where over twenty "blokes" of the best agreed to get down to it. And so, at last, to *East London Group*. They have been going slowly, of set purpose, up till now, but

* This Lamp, dedicated to the memory of Gilbert Talbot, "Uncle Harry" himself bore to the Prince of Wales for first lighting on December 19, 1925, and took with him to Africa when he sailed.

† Some of these boys are pictured in Plate I, 'scene' 3, at the end of this number of the JOURNAL.

had worked up a good meeting in the Railway Institute, and with the 30-40 men who gave in their names, they will have the material for one of the finest groups ever. So may it be!

If, as I hope, *Port Elizabeth* is added to these seven Eastern Province centres when I get there early in September, there will then be the makings of an Eastern Province Federation, and we shall be able to appoint their Executive and officers. Meanwhile Bert Oldfield is acting as Central Correspondent for all the E.P. Groups. The Transvaal Provisional Executive held its first meeting last week, but I shall hope to write more about this after my return visit to Johannesburg.

The next turn in the wheel is this glorious "Garden Colony" Natal; first *Pietermaritzburg*, then *Durban*, and I hope, *Ladysmith*. It is great to know that Gilbert Williams has been for the last 48 hours not 100 miles away up the coast, and may Toc H hopes, my own and others', rest on him during the coming year!

—Yours Toc-Aitchily, HARRY ELLISON.

IN MEMORIAM: WILLIAM TURNER

ON July 1, people living in Bromley were dismayed to learn that one of their most respected fellow-townsmen had been found shot: the verdict at the coroner's inquest a few days later was that he died by his own hand. Within a few hours of his death a London newspaper had established the fact, hitherto wholly unsuspected, that he was not entitled to the rank of Brigadier-General or to certain decorations which he had assumed, and this "revelation," the text for posters and sensational headlines in a number of papers for several days, must have reached our members all over the country. For much mention was made of Scouts, of which William Turner was the beloved local Commissioner, and of Toc H, of which he was a most faithful Branch secretary. "There were many," said a Bromley newspaper, "who thought that there would be startling revelations at the inquest. There were no 'revelations,' but what did transpire was a most wonderful demonstration of loyalty and love that refused to be moved from its steadfastness by the implied smirch across the otherwise splendid character of the dead man." Against this tragic aberration and against the circumstances of his death, Toc H members in Kent and at Headquarters will always set the true example of the daily life he lived among them. In the face of vague, unfounded charges, and before the inquest had brought out all the facts, Tubby wrote an open letter to the Sunday newspapers which was widely published. Nothing has since occurred to modify an estimate of William Turner which all of us who knew him whole-heartedly share.

"I am the last person in the world" wrote Tubby, "to ask for the suppression of the essential facts concerning the strange great-hearted man who died at Bromley last Thursday. Some of the facts are formidable enough and cannot be condoned, yet I would beg that he should be forgiven much, for he was assuredly a loyal lover of the cause of men and a faithful friend to hundreds of young fellows. I did not know him well, but first met his splendid service as Scout Commissioner some years ago; and it is the barest truth to say that some hundreds of boys, and several hundred men as well, have learned to look upon him as the best man they know. Whatever his other faults and failings, due perhaps in no small measure to his sufferings, his influence was sincere and wholesome, and I for one shall continue so to remember him. God forbid that this tragedy, which is heartbreaking to hundreds of straight-forward and inarticulate men and lads in South London, should be yet further deepened by the failure of the work to which he gave his whole heart and pain-proof energy. His secrets and sufferings are over. Let us allow the many who mourn him to hold his memory dear."

THE BELOVED PHYSICIAN

IN the JOURNAL of June and July, 1924, members of Toc H learned, from the pen of Alec Paterson, the story of John Stansfeld, founder of the Oxford Medical Mission (now the Oxford and Bermondsey Club) which Tubby has long known, loved, and called the "cradle" of Toc H. Our readers will remember the story, wonderful in its simplest sense, of the Civil Servant who became—always in his "spare time"—an undergraduate at Oxford, a medical student in Edinburgh, a doctor and boys' club leader simultaneously in Bermondsey; and finally abandoned the Civil Service—but not medicine or boys—to take orders. For thirteen years now he has laboured joyfully—one hour in the parson's black coat and the next in the doctor's white one, in the poorest parish in Oxford, finding time to build a tiny church of stone and thatch with his own hands on some waste land and to run boys' camps there, to be chaplain of the gaol, and a Guardian of the Poor, to sting the City Council and the richest College in Oxford into rebuilding slums, to visit his patients up to midnight—and to learn an African native language or two. For, being *only* 72 years of age, he has decided to start a new and big adventure: he sailed on July 29 for Kenya Colony. He goes as a doctor to the Maseno Hospital, on the Uganda border, at the terminus of the railway. "As a doctor?"—No, as "*The Doctor*," the name by which he is known to thousands of grateful men, women and children in Bermondsey and Oxford. Alike in his simple, rapid utterances and with his skilful hands he preaches the Gospel of healing Love at every season. The Sunday before he sailed he said "Good-bye" to us—the old guard and the new—in Bermondsey Parish Church. Alec Paterson conducted the brief service, reading the lesson from St. Luke, the beloved physician. And then The Doctor stood out in the aisle, a slim, young, white-haired figure and spoke to his old boys. Thirty years have not changed the staccato delivery, the little touches of humour (the Doctor preaches mostly with his eyes shut and a smile on his face), the vivid illustrations or the quick gestures. It is no figure of speech to say that none present will ever forget the picture of Paternoster Row and Amen Corner and the small boy with a big barrow of books, for whom a prosperous City man got off the pavement and to whose help at an awkward kerb the workman without a collar ran. "*Paternoster Row—Our Father's Lane—we are all travelling it now: and some time it must come to Amen Corner—So be it: it is finished.*" And then our Father will ask us whether we pushed the boy off the pavement or passed him by in difficulties. But such good things can happen in *Our Father's Lane*! I saw these things happen last time I was there. . . ." Fellowship and Service—the Doctor's one text. And so John Stansfeld has gone—to his next job. And there shall be many a black man to say—as many and many a white one has said in this last half century "There was a man sent from God, and his name was John." B. B.

THE GREATEST PILGRIMAGE OF ALL

PILGRIMAGES do not lose their power over men's hearts and minds. A hundred members of Toc H went as pilgrims to the Passion Play four years ago; double that number go this month to Ypres, our "native place"; some day we shall visit the home of St. Francis, to which the whole world is turning in this anniversary year. But the first and the greatest pilgrimage remains—"Let us go even unto Bethlehem." Recently Padre Steer of Jerusalem Group wrote to Tubby: "I wonder whether Toc H will like to have a hand in the conversion of England. We here have it on the chest that the conversion has to come from Jerusalem. . . . Your job is to help with the preparation of a People's Pilgrimage for next year." So Padre Steer has already taken certain steps, and we hope to have more to say of this later. Meanwhile—seriously, think of it!

THE OPENING OF MARK I., SOUTH AMERICA

In the July JOURNAL (p. 270) the bare fact—in the words of a cable—that “British Minister opened House” on June 30 in Buenos Aires, was reported. And now a copy of the *Standard* of Buenos Aires of July 1 has reached us, devoting a whole page to this “impressive inauguration.” The first noteworthy thing about it is that the donor (a lady) of this very valuable addition to Toc H life and property still insists on remaining anonymous—a signal instance of that “secret service” which has often been, and should be, characteristic of the Toc H spirit. W. H. Krabbe, who has acted throughout as her agent in the acquisition of the House, quoted from a letter of hers in which she wrote: “I have been interested for some time in the Toc H movement, which was started in the Ypres salient where our eldest boy was killed, and I feel sure that if my husband were here he would approve of helping to start such a House in the Argentine, where he spent so many happy years and from where so much has come to make life pleasant to us.” Thus readily does she pay her “rent for a room on earth.” The second noteworthy thing was that the House was opened by Sir Malcolm Robertson, the second British Minister in the Argentine, in turn, to give Toc H active help. The third noteworthy thing was his speech in opening it. He was introduced by “Peato” (W. V. Peat), as Chairman of the Branch, who recited the “Four Points of the Compass” and stressed the real objects, of a Toc H Mark. Sir Malcolm Robertson, in the course of his speech said: “At this time above all times, the Four Points of your Compass should make a living appeal to every man who loves his country, to every breathing human being. It is just this that we need—‘a new spirit between man and man.’ . . . The human spirit, the love of one’s kind, the readiness to give and to receive service—these can be made into permanent forces; these can be cultivated, these can be developed for the good of the entire world. It is in that development that the only real hope of lasting peace lies, the only real hope of continuous progress in our own beloved country, and on this earth of God’s. What it all means is team work in a conscious, high and noble purpose. When we have reached that point we shall understand ‘the mind of Christ’ . . . In the name of all that we hold sacred, all that is high, all that is noble in human endeavour, I declare this House open!” A message from the Patron was received, and after the ceremony of “Light,” the Rev. Archibald Bell, of St. Andrew’s Scots Church, dedicated the House with prayer. The warmest wishes from us all to the brethren of B.A.!

A ROYAL TEXT

A THRILL of an unusual sort ran through the City on Wednesday, July 21, when H.R.H. The Duchess of York paid a delightfully informal visit to New June. She has shown a great interest in the L.W.H. for some months, and has recently consented to become its Patroness. She timed her visit to fit in with the busy hour of the Lunch Club, and, being received on the pavement (!) by the President of the L.W.H. (the Duchess of Devonshire) and the Chairman of the Council (Mrs. Horne), was piloted at once to the rose-decked club-room on the second floor. The stairs of New June are by now a well-known test of anyone’s zeal, but they did not daunt the Duchess, who spent half-an-hour inspecting every corner of the house, the Lunch Club, the roof garden, and the view, and went away bearing not only L.W.H. match-books in her hand but an experience of the family atmosphere in her heart. A journey round All Hallows, conducted by Tubby, followed, and our Patroness offered to bring back with her from Australia such memento as Toc H there might wish to send to All Hallows to rest beside the sword of Edmund Street. Future generations will be somewhat mystified to note in the church register that the “Text” on July 21, 1926, was “Elizabeth.”

A. B. S. M.

MULTUM IN PARVO

♣ Heartiest congratulations to DONCASTER and WELLINGTON (New Zealand) which were promoted, on the recommendation of the Guard of the Lamp, to Branch status by the Central Executive on July 5. Doncaster for the purposes of representation on the Central Council, will be grouped with Sheffield and Rotherham Branches.

♣ Tubby has had a cable dated July 7, from Padre John B. Elliott of St. John's, NEW-FOUNDLAND—"Diehards not dead! Met tonight. Launched Group under Pickford's (i.e., Sir Alfred Pickford, Overseas Scout Commissioner) delightful chairmanship. Great Meeting. Newfoundland on map at last!" Bravo!

♣ H.Q. has received welcome visits from many OVERSEAS MEMBERS lately—among them Padre Cyril Pearson (Calcutta), Lake Lake (Buenos Aires), Godfrey Evans (Johannesburg), Padre Cardross Grant (Keiskama Hoek), Jack Perston (Wellington, N.Z.), Lea Luquer (U.S.A.) and last, but certainly not least, Ted Jessup, the Headmaster, and four boys, George Day, Henry Nichols, Jack Dunlop and Murray Coggeshall, of Ridgefield School, Connecticut (where Padre Lusk lives) who stayed at The Brothers' House, visited Christ's Hospital and Lancing, and were then driven by Geoff. Tetley and his brother to see Toc H in Birmingham, Sheffield, &c. Albert White (Sydney Jobmaster) has been spending a hectic "holiday" on Tubby's staff at the Porch Room.

♣ The Guards of the Lamp have received a Rushlight beautifully made by hand by 'Lofty' of Sydney Toc H from the original drawing which appeared in the April JOURNAL last year. It is made of solid brass from H.M.S. Australia, and is to be presented to some Group at home.

♣ The BEXHILL LAMP, at the 1925 Birthday has been subscribed for by the whole Branch and has now received dedication *In Memory of Bexhill's fallen: Lit by unselfish sacrifice, maintained by unselfish service.*

♣ Best wishes to LESLIE BLAND (Jobmaster of Hampstead Group) and Elsie Lansdown, who were married on July 24 by Dr. Horton at Lyndhurst Road Church; and to S. T. CLARK (Crowborough Group) and Marjorie Mitchell, married by Padre Pat McCormick (Croydon Branch) on July 17.

♣ The present SUMMER NUMBER of the JOURNAL is, as usual, more of a "magazine" than a "newspaper." The October number, however, will contain reports of five conferences—Merseyside, London Jobmasters', Countrymen's Council, L.W.H., and the H.Q. Staff Conference, and a lot of news from home and overseas Branches and Groups.

♣ About 180 names have been received for the YPRES PILGRIMAGE on August 28-29.

SECRETARIES' LIST,

July Alterations and Additions:

(a) *New Groups (at home):* BURRADON, J. Murray, 74, Mayfield Avenue, Cramlington, Northumberland; CATTERICK, R. J. Cubberley, c/o D.O.R.E. Reconstruction, Catterick Camp, Yorks; CHESTERFIELD, T. Phillips, 66, Walton Drive, Baythorpe, Chesterfield. (*Overseas—Transvaal*): AUCKLAND PARK, G. S. Vincent, 37, Wargrave Avenue, Auckland Park; BELGRAVIA, M. M. Rushton, Nourse Mines, Ltd., P.O. Box 32, Denver; BENONI, R. H. McGregor, 143, Newlands Avenue; GERMISTON, C. E. Rushworth, School House, Primrose, Germiston; JOHANNESBURG CENTRAL, N. Larkin, 17, Viljoen Street, Judith's Paarl, and H. J. Raubenheimer, 51, Jorissen Street; KRUGERSDORP, R. J. Yell, 87, Luipaard Street; NORTH-EASTERN DISTRICT, A. R. Martin, "Aviemoore," Oaklands; PRETORIA, J. D. A. Green, Swimming Baths; SOUTHERN DISTRICT, G. M. Lark, c/o Chief Accountant's Office, South African Railways, Johannesburg; SPRINGS, G. J. Grung, West Springs, Ltd., P.O. Box 190, Springs; YEOVILLE, P. E. Cukey, St. John's College, Yeoville, Johannesburg. (*Cape Province*): GRAHAMSTOWN, R. Currey, St. Andrew's College.

(b) *Change of Secretary*: BROMLEY, J. S. Lock, 213 Southlands Road, Bickley, Kent; CALCUTTA, J. R. Davidson, 100, Clive Street; CAMBRIDGE, J. M. Forde, St. Catherine's College (*Asst. 'Varsity Sec.*); CHELTENHAM "A", R. Edwards, c/o E. Wright, Havana House, The Promenade; CULLERCOATS, H. S. Priestley, 11 Percy Avenue, Cullercoats, Whitley Bay; DORMANSTOWN, L. Swaine, 3, The Green; GLOUCESTER, F. J. Hutchinson, Leasgill, Stroud Road; HULL, W. A. Lunn, Mark X, Clarendon House; KESTON, C. D. Quint, Lakes Road, Keston; MIRFIELD, E. P. K. Hirst, 23 Nettleton Road; NEWCASTLE, R. A. Shilston, Mark XVIII, Greystoke, Grainger Park Road; YORK, A. Stacey, 37, Melbourne Street; VANCOUVER, J. T. Harvey, 607, Roger's Buildings.

(c) *Change of Secretary's Address*: GAINS-

BOROUGH, Secretary to News Office, Market Place; NEWPORT Secretary to Bush Hotel; SUTTON-IN-ASHFIELD Secretary to 31, Council Houses, near Alfreton.

(d) *Corrections*: DEESIDE Secretary's address is 40 (not 64), Church Street; GAINSBOROUGH Secretary's name is Plowright (not Blowright); HULME Secretary's address is 19, Russell Street (not 16, Rutland Street), Moss Side, Manchester; LIGHTCLIFFE Secretary's address is Northowram (not Nathowram); WEST SHEFFIELD Secretary's address is Ruth Square (not Ruth Street).

(e) *Delete* LEAMINGTON Group from the List.

(f) *L.W.H.*: *Promotion*—CARDIFF Group to be a Branch. *Change of Secretary*: SHEFFIELD, Mrs. Redrobe, 219, Abbeyfield Road, Pitsmoor; WINNIPEG, Miss McLennan, 228, Spence Street.

ROUND THE WORLD WITH TOC H

SERIES I.

These pictures come from various sources:—

i. **FEDERATED MALAY STATES**: Lepers on the leper island of Pulau Pankor Lant reading magazines and papers collected and taken across by the F.M.S. Branch of Toc H (*Photograph by R. J. B. Clayton—See April JOURNAL, p. 145*).

ii. **MADRAS**: Toc H Scout Course—3rd Madras Training Troop—left to right (standing), Commander Digby Beste, L/c Needham, Carvallo, G. B. W. Woodroffe (*Camp Commandant*), Murphy, Parker (*Group Jobmaster*), Lawford, McIntyre—(sitting) Stewart, Ebby, Ford, Kenneth, Stagg (*Group Secretary*).—(In front) Melver, Rodrigues, Johnson, Rouse, Rodrigues. (*See June JOURNAL, p. 228*).

iii. **SOUTH AFRICA**: Winners of the Toc H Football Cup (Taberer Dormitory), St. Matthew's College, Cape Province, 1925. (The Headmaster, Rev. A. Cardross Grant, and one of the masters, Bert Oldfield, are members of Keiskama Hock Branch—*see May JOURNAL, p. 203*).

iv. **TORONTO**: Sir Alfred Pickford (Chief Commissioner of Overseas Scouts) visits Mark II C—on a tricycle. *See July JOURNAL, p. 266*.)

v. **AUSTRALIA**: The First Federal Conference of Toc H Australia at Melbourne, April 27—May 1, 1926. (*See July JOURNAL, p. 253*.) Left to right (seated)—R. C. Crowther (*W.A.*), Padre H. E. E. Hayes (*Toc H Australia*), W. A. Cave (*S.A.*), Dean Crotty (*Newcastle, N.S.W.*), H. J. Ramsay (*Vic., Chairman*), Dr. Crookston (*Moderator-General of the Presbyterian Assembly*), Padre W. D. Jackson (*Vic.*), Padre T. G. Paul (*N.S.W.*), H. Chapman (*N.S.W.*)—(standing) J. S. McCreery (*Vic.*), J. C. B. Matthews (*Vic.*), R. C. Cockerell (*Vic.*), Padre C. L. Riley (*W.A.*), Padre C. G. Williams (*Tas.*), R. G. Baxter (*Vic.*), M. Robinson (*S.A.*), Padre K. T. Henderson (*Vic.*), L. G. W. Farmer (*N.S.W.*), L. R. Wagstaff (*Tas.*). In the foreground is a home-made Rushlight. (*Photograph by C. F. Frazer, Melbourne*).

SERIES II.

The "bricks" shown in this section of the walls of Toc H were dropped by Pat Leonard's camera on the World Tour in 1925. They are as follow:—

i. **MELBOURNE**: Headquarters of Toc H, Victoria, with a member at the typewriter and a home-made brass Rushlight on the table.

ii. **ADEN**: Toc H meeting on board *S.S. Mantua*—members from left to right) Roger Day (*of the E.T.C.*), Tubby, Geoffrey Tetley, Macensen, Hugh Lanchester (*of the E.T.C.*), Major Dain (*Indian Railways*—seated in front).

iii. **TORONTO**: Frank Webb (*Warden of Mark II C*) and Stuart Strathy (who received the "Byng of Vimy" Lamp for Toronto at the Birthday Festival 1925).

iv. **DARJEELING**: Kinchenjunga (the snow peak seen above the clouds) in the distance, St. Paul's School in the foreground.

v. **AUCKLAND (N.Z.)**: Mark Robinson (*now of Adelaide*) meets Tubby on arrival; S. S. *Niagara* in the background.

vi. **ADELAIDE**, Lord Forster's visit to St. Peter's School on his last day in Australia: left to right—Mark Robinson, the Head Boy, H. E. Lord Forster, Julian Bickersteth (*Headmaster*), Hon. Charles Mulholland.

vii. **JERUSALEM**, a Toc H meeting: left to right—Evans, "Bun" Chitty (*late Oxford Branch*), Padre Charles Steer, Geoffrey Tetley, Tubby, Bobs Ford (*Kandy Group*, returning home).

viii. **MONTREAL**, Tubby and Ian Collins (*Secretary of Montreal Group*).

ix. **CAIRO**, left to right—Canon and Mrs. Bickersteth (*father and mother of Burgon of Toc H, Canada, and Julian of Toc H Australia*), Pat Leonard, Mrs. Hugh Jones (*sister of P.M. Steele of Mark IV*), Bishop Gwynne (*of Egypt and the Sudan*) and Hugh Jones.

x. **SYDNEY**, Notice-board outside Headquarters at No. 5, Hamilton Street—"Toc H is your job!"

ROUND THE WORLD WITH TOC H—IN FIFTEEN SCENES.

The key to these two sets of photographs will be found on the opposite page.



